

Non s for the
Scandinavian Kings' Sagas



Paul A. White

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Contents

*Dedicated to my mother
Theresa White
and to the memory of my father
Gerald White*

List of Abbreviations	ix
Series Editor's Foreword	xv
Introduction	1
Chapter One Background to The Kings' Sagas	7
Chapter Two Art and the Synoptic Historians' Use of Foreign Sources	37
Chapter Three Foreign Sources in the Saga of Ólaf Tryggvason	57
Chapter Four Ólaf Saga and the Hagiographic Tradition	81
Chapter Five The Period of the Great Compilations: <i>Markusanna</i> , <i>Patrikanna</i> , and <i>Þatnaríngla</i>	93
Chapter Six Conclusions	111
Notes	123
Bibliography	155
Index	165

Contents

List of Abbreviations	ix
Series Editor's Foreword	xv
Introduction	1
<i>Chapter One</i>	7
Background to The Kings' Sagas	
<i>Chapter Two</i>	37
Ari and the Synoptic Historians' Use of Foreign Sources	
<i>Chapter Three</i>	57
Foreign Sources in the Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason	
<i>Chapter Four</i>	81
Óláfs Saga and the Hagiographic Tradition	
<i>Chapter Five</i>	93
The Period of the Great Compilations <i>Morkinskinna</i> , <i>Fagrskinna</i> , and <i>Heimskringla</i>	
<i>Chapter Six</i>	111
Conclusions	
Notes	123
Bibliography	155
Index	165

List of Abbreviations

- AB* *Adam of Bremen. Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum.* In *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Hannover: Hahn, 1876.
- AG* *The Whole Works of Alfred the Great: King of England.* Ed. Giles. 2 vols. London, 1858. Rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969.
- ASC* *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.* Ed. and trans. Benjamin Thorpe. 2 vols. Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, published by the Authority of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. London, 1861. Rpt. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964.
- ÅNOH* *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie.*
- Bsk* *Biskupa sögur.* Eds. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Jón Sigurðsson. 2 vols. Copenhagen: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1858.
- CHP* *The Carmen de Hastingae Proelio of Guy Bishop of Amiens.* Eds. Catherine Morton and Hope Muntz. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992.
- EE* *Encomium Emmae Reginae.* Ed. Alistair Campbell. London: Royal Historical Society, 1949.
- Flat I-III* *Flateyjarbók: En samling af norske konge-sagaer med indskudte mindre fortællinger om begivenheder i og udenfor Norge samt annaler.* Eds. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and C. R. Unger. 3 vols. Christiania [Oslo]: Malling, 1860-68.

- Fris* *Codex Frisianus. En samling af norske kongesagaer.* Ed. C. R. Unger. Christiania [Oslo]: P. T. Malling, 1871.
- Fsk* *Fagrskinna—Nóregs konunga tal.* Ed. Bjarni Einarsson. Íslenzk fornrit, 29. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1984.
- GM* *The Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth.* Ed. Neil Wright. 4 vols. Vol. I: *Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS. 568.* Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985.
- GW I-VIII* *Giraldi Cambrensis opera.* Ed. James Dimock. 8 vols. *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, published by the Authority of Her Majesty's Treasurer, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. London, 1861–91. Rpt. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964.
- HA* Honorius Augustodunensis. *Imago mundi.* Ed. Valerie Flint. *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 57. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1983.
- HE* Bede. *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum.* Ed. Carol Plummer. 1896. Rpt. Oxford: Clarendon, 1956.
- Herz* *Herzog Ernst.* Ed. and trans. Bernhard Sowinski. 1970. Rpt. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1989.
- Hkr I-III* *Heimskringla I-III.* Ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson. Íslenzk fornrit, 26–28. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1941–51.
- IF 2* *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar.* Ed. Sigurður Nordal. Íslenzk fornrit, 2. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1933.
- IF 7* *Brennu-Njáls saga.* Ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson. Íslenzk fornrit, 12. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1954.
- IF 35* *Knýtlinga saga.* Ed. Bjarni Guðnason. Íslenzk fornrit, 35. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982.
- Ísl* *Íslendingabók.* Ed. Jakob Benediktsson. Íslenzk fornrit, 1. 2 vols: Vol. I. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968. Pp. 1–28.

- JEGP* *Journal of English and Germanic Philology.*
- JW I-III* *The Chronicle of John of Worcester.* Eds. R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1995.
- KL* *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder fra vikingtid til reformationstid.* Eds. Johannes Brøndsted, Bernt Hjejle, Peter Skautrup. 22 vols. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1956–78.
- KMS I-III* *Karlamagnús saga. The saga of Charlemagne and his Heroes.* Trans. Constance B. Hieatt. 3 vols. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1975.
- Land I-II* *Landnámabók.* Ed. Jakob Benediktsson. Íslenzk fornrit, 1. 2 vols. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1968.
- le Prevost* Orderic Vitalis. *Historia ecclesiastica libri tredecim.* Ed. August le Prevost. 4 vols. Vol. I. Paris: Julius Renouard, 1838.
- Lex. d. an. Lit.* *Lexikon der altnordischen Literatur.* Eds. Rudolf Simek and Hermann Pálsson. Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1987.
- Lex. d. MAs I-IX* *Lexikon des Mittelalters.* 9 vols. Munich: Artemis and Winkler, 1977–98.
- Lex. Poet.* *Lexikon poeticum antiquae linguae septentrionalis. Ordbog over det norsk-islandske skjaldesprog.* Ed. Finnur Jónsson. 2nd. ed. Det kongelige nordiske oldskriftselskap. Copenhagen: S. L. Møllers, 1931.
- LS* *Óláfs saga hins helga. Die "Legendarische Saga" über Olaf den Heiligen.* Ed. Anne Heinrichs et al. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1982.
- MEA I-III* *Memorials of St. Edmunds Abbey.* Ed. Thomas Arnold. 3 vols. *Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, published by the Authority of Her Majesty's Treasurer under the Master of the Rolls. London: 1890–96. Rpt. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1965.

- MHN 1–68 *Theodrici Monachi Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*. In *Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ: Latinske kildeskrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen*. Ed. Gustav Storm. Kristiania [Oslo], 1880. Rpt. Oslo: Aas & Wahl Boktrykkeri A.s, 1973. Pp. 1–68.
- MHN 71–124 *Historia Norvegiæ*. In *Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ: Latinske kildeskrifter til Norges historie i middelalderen*. Ed. Gustav Storm. Kristiania [Oslo], 1880. Rpt. Oslo: Aas & Wahl Boktrykkeri A.s, 1973. Pp. 71–124.
- Msk *Morkinskinna*. Ed. Finnur Jónsson. Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, 53. Copenhagen: J. Jørgensen & Co., 1932.
- (N)HT *(Norsk) Historisk tidsskrift*.
- Oddr *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar af Oddr Snorrason munk*. Ed. Finnur Jónsson. Copenhagen: Gad, 1932.
- OS (s) *Den store saga om Olav den hellige*. Eds. O. A. Johnsen and Jón Helgason. 2 vols. Oslo: Jacob Dybwad, 1941.
- OVI-VI Orderic Vitalis. *The Ecclesiastical History*. Ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall. 6 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1969–80.
- PMLA *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*.
- RH *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*. Ed. William Stubbs. 4 vols. Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, published by the Authority of Her Majesty's Treasury, under the direction of the Master of the Rolls. London, 1868–71. Rpt. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964.
- Sall *Sallust*. Trans. J. C. Rolfe. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1947.
- SBVS *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*
- Skj I-II *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*. Ed. Finnur Jónsson. 2 vols. Vol. IA. *Tekst eftir håndskrifterne*. Copenhagen: Roskilde and Bagger, 1967.

- Ss *Sverris saga*. Ed. Gustav Indrebø. Den norske historiske kildeskriftkommission. Kristiania: 1920. Rpt. Oslo: Styret for kjeldeskriftfondet, 1981.
- Sturl *Sturlunga saga*. Ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1878.
- Sulp *Sulpice Sévère. Vie de Saint Martin*. Ed. Jacques Fontaine. 3 vols. Vol. I. *Sources Chrétiennes*, 133–35. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1967.
- ÞS I-II *Þiðreks saga af Bern*. Ed. Guðni Jónsson. 2 vols. Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1954.
- VH *Vita Haraldi. The Romance of the Life of King Harold, King of England*. Ed. Walter de Gray Birch. London: Elliot, 1885.
- VK Einhard. *Vita Karoli Magni. The Life of Charlemagne*. Ed. and trans. Evelyn Firchow and Edwin Zeydel. Miami: U of Miami P, 1972.
- WA William of Apulia. *De rebus gestis Normannorum in Sicilia*. Ed. J. P. Migne. *Patrologia Latina*, Vol 149. Paris: Garnier Bros., 1890.
- Wace *Wace's Le Roman de Brut: A History of the British*. Ed. and trans. Judith Weiss. Exeter: U of Exeter P, 1999.
- WJ I-II William of Jumièges. *The Gesta Normannorum ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*. Ed. and trans. Elisabeth M. C. van Houts. 2 vols. Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford: Clarendon, 1992–95.
- WM *William of Malmesbury: Gesta regum Anglorum. The History of the English Kings*. Ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors et al. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.
- WP *Guillaume de Poitiers: Histoire de Guillaume le Conquérant*. Ed. and trans. Raymonde Foreville. Les classiques de l'histoire de France au moyen age, 23. Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1952.

Series Editor's Foreword

Far from providing just a musty whiff of yesteryear, research in Medieval Studies enters the new century as fresh and vigorous as never before. Scholars representing all disciplines and generations are consistently producing works of research of the highest caliber, utilizing new approaches and methodologies. Volumes in the Medieval History and Culture series include studies on individual works and authors of Latin and vernacular literatures, historical personalities and events, theological and philosophical issues, and new critical approaches to medieval literature and culture.

Momentous changes have occurred in Medieval Studies in the past thirty years, in teaching as well as in scholarship. The Medieval History and Culture series enhances research in the field by providing an outlet for monographs by scholars in the early stages of their careers on all topics related to the broad scope of Medieval Studies, while at the same time pointing to and highlighting new directions that will shape and define scholarly discourse in the future.

Francis G. Gentry

Introduction

Within the corpus of medieval Icelandic literature the genre of the kings' sagas is unique. Whereas the family sagas chronicle distinctly Icelandic events and history, the kings' sagas give accounts of events which took place outside of Iceland. Not only do they record the reigns and deeds of the various kings of Norway, but many sagas of the kings follow their movements both inside and outside of Scandinavia, including journeys to lands as distant as England, Greece, Russia and Palestine. The international character of the kings' sagas and the frequency with which their authors describe the major events in a king's reign in relation to those transpiring in other countries, lend these sagas a sense of historicity, in contrast to the family sagas, which are of a more distinctly national and literary character.

The kings' sagas were composed earlier than the family sagas. Exactly which was the first royal biography is a question which has long been debated by scholars, but two of the first kings' sagas, the "Oldest saga of St. Óláfr" and Oddr Snorrason's saga of Óláfr Tryggvason, were both written down at roughly the same time at the end of the twelfth century. Not only is this several decades prior to the time of the composition of the generally better-known family sagas of the mid-thirteenth century, but the first kings' sagas also appear to be the products of a sudden burst of literary activity in Iceland, and at least one other saga of one of the kings of Norway, *Sverris saga*, can be dated to this time as well.

Whereas the family sagas are anonymous, the identity of many of the authors of the kings' sagas can be established with relative certainty. The bishops' sagas and other contemporary sagas provide a good deal of information about the intellectual life in the monasteries and schools of Iceland, and they often name the authors of the early kings' sagas. We know, for example, that the first saga of Óláfr Tryggvason was originally written in Latin by the monk Oddr Snorrason at the monastery of Pingeyrar (ca. 1190), and that shortly thereafter another monk at the same monastery, Gunnlaugr Leifsson

(d. 1218–19), wrote his own Latin version of Óláfr Tryggvason's saga. *Sverris saga* was written by Oddr and Gunnlaugr's abbot Karl Jónsson, and another mid-twelfth century work about the kings of Norway known as *Hryggjarstykki (though it is no longer extant, and its exact contents have been debated; see Chapter 1), was written by the Icelander Eiríkr Oddsson.

The kings' sagas are of particular interest and importance to scholars of medieval Icelandic literature, and much has been written about their earliest identifiable writers and the locations in Iceland where they composed their works (for an overview of scholarship, see Andersson 1985). There has also been much debate about the provenance of the various extant manuscripts and their textual relationships. Issues of particular importance for the origins and evolution of the kings' sagas include the scope of the very first, and no longer extant, Icelandic works enumerating the reigns of the Norwegian kings, and their influence on the authors of the later kings' sagas. Among these early historical sources are the now lost "áttartal" and "konunga ævi" of Ari Þorgilsson, and a similar work by Sæmundr Sigfússon, both of which were composed in the first half of the twelfth century. A second area that has attracted much scholarly attention has been the circumstances surrounding the composition of the "Oldest saga of St. Óláfr." For a long time, this saga was considered to be the first royal biography, and attempts to reconstruct its content and determine its relationship to and influence on other early sagas have continued to this day.

The emphasis on analyzing the origins of the earliest Icelandic sagas, on establishing the identity of their authors, and on textual relationships has resulted in an imbalance in the amount of scholarly attention paid to potential foreign literary influences and models for early Icelandic literature. However, it would be a mistake to state that a scholarly appreciation of the importance of foreign sources has been lacking altogether. With regard to the more popular and better known family sagas, Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1959) noticed the importance of Gregory's *Dialogues* for *Njáls saga*, and Regis Boyer (1971) detected Gregory's presence in *Egils saga*. Carol Clover (1982, 1985) made a strong case for the importance of works of Western European literature as models for Icelandic saga authors of various literary techniques, as well as for possibly providing Icelanders with an organizational principle for the larger saga compilations. Sverrir Tómasson (1988) concurs with Clover's conclusions and extends her arguments to apply to principles of Latin grammar and rhetoric.

Although scholars have noticed foreign influence on works of early Icelandic literature and on the kings' sagas, instances of such influence are generally referred to and discussed only on an individual basis in connection

with a particular work or manuscript. For example, both Ólafía Einarsdóttir (1964) and Svend Ellehøj (1965) provided valuable discussion of the foreign sources consulted by Ari Þorgilsson for his *Íslendingabók*, among them, the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. These foreign works enabled Ari to establish several dates from the Christian calendar according to which he could date other events from Scandinavian history. However, the implications of the presence of written foreign sources in Iceland for other early works of Icelandic literature has never been investigated as a topic in its own right. Books, in whatever form, were precious in the Middle Ages, and if Ari, who is not reported ever to have left Iceland, had access to a version of Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, it is logical to assume that the work continued to circulate in Iceland. This fact would in turn lend credence to the possibility that later saga authors, perhaps the author of a king's saga, could have consulted Adam's work as well.

In what follows, I shall give a brief overview of the contributions of previous scholars to the area under investigation. With regard to the early synoptic histories (Theodoricus' *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, *Historia Norwegiae*, and *Agrip af Noregskonungasögum*) much has been written about Theodoricus' use of foreign sources, beginning with Gustav Storm's notes to his 1880 edition of *Monumenta Historica Norvegiae* and culminating in the more recent work of Gudrun Lange (1989). Much of the discussion focuses on the question of whether Theodoricus made use of written sources at his disposal, or whether he cited the authors' names and literary commonplaces from memory (Hanssen 1945, 1949a; see Chapter 2). Asgaut Steinnes (1946–48), Eiliv Skard (1930), and Svend Ellehøj (1965) all commented on the presence of Honorius Augustodunensis' *Imago mundi* in *Historia Norwegiae*, and Gustav Storm (MHN 84) also noticed an apparent borrowing by the author of *Historia Norwegiae* from Gerald of Wales's *Topographica Hibernica*. Storm (MHN 122), Ellehøj (1965), and Bjarni Guðnason (*ÍF* 35 c-cii) all agreed that the same author made use of a version of Roger of Hoveden's *Liber de legibus Angliae* in describing the agreement made between Edmund Ironside and Knútr ríki in 1016, but Storm (MHN 122), Eiliv Skard (1930), and Halvdan Koht (quoted in Skard 1930) disagreed over whether the *Historia Norwegiae*'s reference to King Henry I of England as a "lion of justice" was derived from Roger of Hoveden, Orderic Vitalis, or Geoffrey of Monmouth. Koht (1919) and Jens Hanssen (1949b) both emphasized the importance of Geoffrey's *Prophetiae Merlini* to the author of *Historia Norwegiae*, and there is widespread agreement among scholars that he also had access to Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*.

The importance of Adam of Bremen's history for the various sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason was discussed by Gustav Storm (*MHN* 124; 1873), Alexander Bugge (1873), Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (*Hsk* cxxv-viii), Asgaut Steinnes (1946–48), Svend Ellehøj (1965), and Lars Lönnroth (1963). Furthermore, Þorvaldur Bjarnarson (1878), G. Turville-Petre (1953), and Lars Lönnroth (1963) agree that the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great was another important source for the composition of the various sagas about Óláfr. Lönnroth (1963) noticed a borrowing from Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* in both Oddr's and Snorri's versions of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*. Peter Foote (1959a, 1959b) discussed the popularity of the twelfth-century French *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* in Iceland, and Lönnroth (1963) and Knud Tøgeby (1975) made a case for Oddr having used it for his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason. Alexander Bugge (1910), Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (*Hsk* cxxx), and Lönnroth (1963) all aired the possibility that Notker of St. Gall's *De Carolo Magno* served as the literary inspiration for Oddr's vivid description of the events immediately preceding the battle of Svöldr, a description that was retained by later redactors of Óláfr's saga. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (1936, 110–11) noticed that Gunnlaugr Leifsson seemed to have made use of a Latin text for his description of Óláfr's later life after the battle, and Lönnroth (1963) identified that source as *Vita Haraldi*, an English work about the later life of King Harold Godwinson, who, like Óláfr at Svöldr, was rumored to have survived the Battle of Hastings.

The scholarship on the various sagas of St. Óláfr is extensive. Biblical allusions and hagiographic commonplaces abound in these sagas, but they contain relatively few borrowings from secular, foreign works of literature and history. Gustav Storm (1875, 1893) noticed literary borrowings from Adam of Bremen's history in the *Legendary saga*. Ove Moberg (1940–42) and Klaus von See (1976) investigated and discussed the provenance of an anecdote related in both the *Legendary saga* and Snorri's "Óláfs saga helga" that is similar to an episode related in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*. Moberg postulated the existence of a now lost legendary Life of Edward the Confessor as a source which allegedly was used by William of Malmesbury and the Icelandic author of the "Oldest saga," while von See emphasized the likelihood of William's *Gesta regum* having been consulted directly by the saga author. Elsewhere Moberg (1941) identified William of Malmesbury as the source consulted by Snorri for his description of the battle at Helgeå, and Joan Turville Petre (1947) discussed the importance of the French *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* as a source for "Rauðs þáttur," a smaller narrative included in Snorri's two sagas of St. Óláfr.

Not surprisingly, the greatest variety and number of foreign sources can be detected in the great compendia *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*. Eduard Sievers (1892), Andreas Heusler (1908), and Anthony Faulkes (1977) all discussed the importance of English genealogies to later Scandinavian authors of history such as Snorri, but other Insular sources were clearly used by the authors of those compendia as well. The importance of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as a source for *Heimskringla* was pointed out by Eilert Ekwall (1928) and Ove Moberg (1941). More recently Kari Ellen Gade (Andersson and Gade 2000) claimed that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was used by the author of *Morkinskinna*. She also suggested that Norman texts such as the *Genealogia regum Anglie* or a closely related text could have been used as the source for *Morkinskinna*'s account of the death of Hǫrðaknútr and emphasized the importance of possibly abbreviated versions of the historical accounts of Norman authors such as William of Jumièges and Orderic Vitalis as sources for the authors of kings' sagas (Gade 1997). Her views on the specifically Norman written source materials are reinforced by the observations of other scholars. For example, the various strategems told in *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* in connection with Haraldr Harðráði's conquests in the Mediterranean appear to be commonplaces in Norman historiography, and theories attempting to account for such potential literary borrowings were offered by Jan de Vries (1931) and Elisabeth van Houts (1983). A more detailed attempt to discern precisely which Norman works of history were employed by various saga authors is a major part of the following examination of non-native sources for the kings' sagas.

The present investigation is based on the previous scholarship outlined above. It discusses the different foreign sources consulted by the authors of the kings' sagas as a subject in its own right, and it spans the period from the composition of Ari's *Íslendingabók* (ca. 1133) until approximately one century later, including the great compendia *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*. The type and number of literary sources discernible in the kings' sagas show that there was a marked change over time in the availability of different source materials, as well as a change in the literary sophistication of the saga authors. The first chapter provides background for the period of the first kings' sagas, as well as information about the various extant texts and manuscripts. The second chapter discusses the earliest relevant texts, Ari's *Íslendingabók* and the early synoptic histories of Norway. The third chapter addresses the various sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason, and the fourth chapter discusses the sagas of Óláfr Haraldsson. The compilations *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* are the subject of the fifth chapter, and the last

chapter is a discussion of the conclusions of this investigation. The analysis of the material, in conjunction with close consideration of what has already been established concerning the travels of Icelanders to European centers of learning, will add to what is known about the extent and quality of book collections in medieval Iceland. It is my hope that the present discussion of the foreign literary resources available to the early saga authors will contribute to a more profound understanding of their methods and of their purpose in composing their literary works of history.

Chapter One

Background to The Kings' Sagas

The origins of Icelandic saga writing are obscure. We know that literature written in the vernacular existed in twelfth-century Iceland. Ari Þorgilsson "the wise" (1068–1148) can be regarded as the most significant author of early Icelandic literature. The author of the *First Grammatical Treatise*, which is dated 1150–1180 (*KL* 5, 415–16), refers to the types of literature most popular in his day, namely, legal, genealogical, religious, and the learned works of Ari. Ari was the first author to write in the vernacular (*Hkr* I, 5), and in addition to his *Íslendingabók* (Book of the Icelanders) from ca. 1133, he is believed to have written at least parts of the first redaction of *Landnámabók* (the Book of Settlements). That version is no longer extant, but the genealogies of prominent Icelanders found in later redactions are believed to stem from Ari (*KL* 10, 215–216). In addition to these first two Icelandic vernacular works, Ari is known to have written an "áttartal" and a "konunga ævi": a genealogy and description of the lives of the kings of Norway. These works, together with another work outlining the lives of the Norwegian kings by Sæmundr Sigfússon, are no longer extant, but later saga authors, including Snorri Sturluson in the prologue to *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I, 6), refer to them, and the works of Sæmundr and Ari are considered to be the ancestors of the later kings' sagas (Andersson 1985, 198–99). However, with the exception of Ari's *Íslendingabók* and *Landnámabók*, most of the twelfth-century vernacular literature has been lost. The oldest other work of Icelandic historical literature which described the lives of Norwegian kings now known to scholars is Eiríkr Oddsson's *Hryggjarstykki, an account of some of the kings who ruled Norway during the twelfth century. Its composition was traditionally dated to the middle of the twelfth century (*Hkr* III, lxiv–lxvi), but more recently Bjarni Guðnason has maintained that *Hryggjarstykki was the saga of only one Norwegian king, Sigurðr slembir, and was composed sometime between 1146 and 1155 (Bjarni Guðnason 1978, 26–8, 144). This text is referred to as a

source by Snorri in his *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III, 318–9) and was also known to the author of *Morkinskinna* (*Msk* 419). Although *Hryggjarstykki is no longer extant, its content can be reconstructed from the *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* versions. The oldest separate biographies of Norwegian kings are the anonymous “Oldest saga of St. Óláfr,” and Oddr Snorrason’s *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*.

Only six fragments of the anonymous “Oldest saga of St. Óláfr” survive in NRA 52 in the Norwegian National Archive (All sigla for MSS follow those of the *Registre* to the *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* [1989]). Gustav Storm believed that two additional fragments from AM 325 IVa 4to were ultimately derived from the “Oldest saga” as well, but this was disproved by Jonna Louis-Jensen (Louis-Jensen 1970; Jónas Kristjánsson 1976, 284). Louis-Jensen’s work has caused scholars to reconsider the dating of what was once held to be the first saga, and Jónas Kristjánsson now dates the composition of the “Oldest saga” to around the year 1200. The content of the “Oldest saga” can be reconstructed from the later thirteenth-century *Legendary saga of St. Óláfr*, which demonstrably used the “Oldest saga” as a source (Jónas Kristjánsson 1976, 282–287).

At about the same time the author of the “Oldest saga of St. Óláfr” composed his work, Oddr Snorrason and Gunnlaugr Leifsson, two monks at the Benedictine monastery at Þingeyrar, each wrote a life of Óláfr Tryggvason in Latin in praise of the first great Norwegian missionary king. Oddr’s original text has not survived, but it was translated into Icelandic, and two fairly complete Icelandic manuscripts (AM 310 4to [A], Holm perg 18 4to [S]), as well as a large fragment of a third (DG 4–7 [U]), are still extant. Oddr is believed to have written his saga around the year 1190. Perhaps inspired by Oddr, Gunnlaugr Leifsson, “the most lettered man of his day” (“bezt skiljandi til bœkr á öllu Íslandi” [*Bsk* II, 31]) wrote his version of the life of Óláfr Tryggvason. Like Oddr, Gunnlaugr wrote in Latin, and his original text has not survived. It was, however, translated into Icelandic at an early date, and large passages from it survive in the later, fourteenth-century *Greatest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason*. Gunnlaugr’s saga is also considered to have been the primary source for the thirteenth-century *Kristni saga* by Sturla Þórðarson (Turville-Petre 1953, 196; Bjarni Aðalbarnarson 1936, 91). We know that Gunnlaugr submitted his work to Gizurr Hallsson the Lawspeaker for emendation (*Flat* I, 517). Since Gizurr died in 1206, and Gunnlaugr probably began his work after Oddr had completed his, Gunnlaugr must have written his saga sometime around the year 1200.

This brief overview summarizes what is known about the earliest period of historical saga writing in late twelfth-century Iceland. A substantial body

of written literature was being produced, and there seems to have been an extraordinary burst of literary activity between the years 1190 and 1200 at the monastery at Þingeyrar. In the case of the sagas of the two Óláfrs, the authors used both native and foreign sources to supply the sagas’ content. Native oral sources, such as skaldic poems and the knowledge of “learned men,” were the bases for a large amount of these first kings’ sagas’ content. Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld had composed poems in honor of King Óláfr Tryggvason in the late tenth century, and both the “Oldest saga” and the *Legendary saga of St. Óláfr* clearly made extensive use of the poetry by Sigvatr Þórðarson and his nephew Óttarr svarti, two skalds who had composed about the later saint Óláfr. In a surviving passage from his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason Gunnlaugr names six people, three men and three women, as oral sources for his work. They were Gellir Þorgilsson, Ásgrímr Vestliðason, Bjarni Bergþórsson, Arngunn Arnórsdóttir, Herdís Daðadóttir, and Þorgerðr Þorsteinsdóttir (*Flat* I, 517). Written native sources for Oddr’s and Gunnlaugr’s sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason include both the Norwegian synoptic historian Theodoricus’ *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* and the *Acta Sanctorum in Seljo* (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson 1936, 69–79). The many instances of miracles and divine intervention betray the influence of English and Continental hagiography, but much use was also made of non-hagiographic written European literature. Written non-native sources include the works of Adam of Bremen, Notker Balbulus, a monk of St. Gallen monastery, and the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory the Great, among others (Lönnroth 1963, 60–72, 83–88; *Hkr* I, cxxix–cxxx). Since almost nothing is known about the composition of kings’ sagas at that time, it will be helpful to look at better-documented workshops of other medieval writers of history to understand the role played by Continental and English literature in Iceland at the end of the twelfth century.

A significant difference between medieval and modern historical writing is the importance of and the reliability placed upon oral informants in the Middle Ages. Adam of Bremen writes in his prologue to the *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* that he used written sources (“aliqua per scedulas dispersa collegi, multa vero mutuavi de hystoriis et privilegiis Romanorum”), but also that the greater part of his information derived from older men who knew the facts (“pleraque omnia seniorum, quibus res nota est, traditione didici, testem habens veritatem” [*AB* 2]).

The Norwegian synoptic historian Theodoricus, writing around 1190, states in his prologue that he used written sources such as Hugh of St. Victor and Sigebert of Gembloux, but also that he relied upon the poems (“carminibus”) of the Icelanders (“quos nos Islendinga vocamus, qui hæc in

suis antiquis carminibus percelebrata recolunt" [MHN 3]). Theodoricus also later mentions that he reports information gleaned "by hearing, and not seeing" ("quia nos non visa sed audita conscripsimus" [MHN 4]). Oral tradition was an important source for his history.

The author of *Jatvarðar saga* indirectly refers to an oral tradition which preceded the written life of King Edward when he states, "Many things transpired during his life concerning his miracles and predictions, that well-informed men have had written in books" ("Margir hlutir urðu þeir í hans lífi um hans jarteinir ok spádóm, at sannfróðir menn hafa ritat látit á bókum" [Flat III, 464]).

Making use of and freely choosing between written and oral sources is also the method employed by the most famous compiler of kings' sagas, Snorri Sturluson, as he tells us in the prologue to *Heimskringla* (Hkr I, 3–4):

Á bók þessi lét ek rita fornar frásagnir . . . svá sem ek hefi heyrt fróða menn segja, svá ok nokkurar kynslóðir þeira eptir því, sem mér hefir kennt verit, sumt þat, er finnsk í langfeðgatali, þar er konungar eða aðrir stórættaðir menn hafa rakit kyn sitt, en sumt er ritat eptir fornum kvæðum eða sǫguljóðum, er menn hafa haft til skemmtanar sér. En þótt vér vitim eigi sannendi á því, þá vitum vér doemi til, at gamlir frœðimenn hafi slíkt fyrir satt haft.

(In this book I have written down old accounts . . . as I have heard wise men say, but also based on some of their genealogies, as they were known to me, some of which information is found in the pedigrees where kings or other persons of exalted lineage have traced their kin, and some is written according to old lays or legends people have kept for their entertainment. And though we do not know the truth of these accounts for certain, we do know that old and learned men considered them to be true.)

The oral component in the composition of the kings' sagas makes tracing literary influences on them difficult. Tracing literary influences in the Middle Ages is an uncertain endeavor even when scholars are dealing with historical sources which are familiar and relatively well-documented. Only rarely can scholars determine whether a medieval writer had access to extant manuscripts of other writers' works, or used a now lost manuscript, or whether an author had only once read a work while traveling, perhaps to another monastery abroad, and had later been forced to rely upon his memory, or upon notes, if he had taken them (Hanssen 1949a, 85). Even when an author seems to be relatively sure of his information, mistakes often occur.

Theodoricus' *Historia* is rife with incorrect references to medieval and classical authors (Hanssen 1945, 168–70). Sometimes an author can be shown to have followed an earlier writer's work closely, only to diverge from his source at certain points and give a radically different version of events. Whether such instances can be attributed to the existence of conflicting oral accounts, the author's personal knowledge, or to the existence of another, no longer extant written source, can rarely be determined. Furthermore, it is wrong to assume that a medieval author would simply strive to reproduce already existing source material. Medieval writers seldom reproduced literary accounts of contemporary or historical events verbatim. The better writers deliberately retold a significant event in their own way, constantly endeavoring to keep the tale interesting, and to demonstrate prowess in style, rhetoric, and vocabulary (Farmer 1962, 43).

The relatively well-documented workshop of the Anglo-Norman historian Orderic Vitalis provides an excellent parallel for helping us to understand the social environment and the historical method which would have been familiar to the later Scandinavian writers of kings' sagas. Orderic was born in Shrewsbury, England, on February 16, 1075, and died at the monastery of St. Evroul in Normandy sometime after 1141 (OVI, 113 n.1). He thus lived and wrote at a time immediately prior to the beginning of the period of saga writing in Scandinavia. Like Oddr Snorrason and Gunnlaugr Leifsson, Orderic was a well-educated Benedictine monk who enjoyed writing history, and who wrote in Latin. Orderic himself seldom traveled, but he seems to have inquired eagerly about news and current events from all travelers with whom he came into contact (OVI, 91; II, xxii–xxiv). The similarity between Orderic's manner of writing history and that of the saga writers is reinforced by Orderic's Norman ancestry and environment. Orderic was steeped in the customs and traditions of the Normans, a people who were at the time still closely related culturally to the Scandinavians. Both Normans and Scandinavians were proud of the secular deeds done by their ancestors and contemporaries. Both peoples thought these deeds worth recording, and both peoples had a long tradition of story telling. Like the works of historians such as Dudo of St. Quentin, William of Poitiers, William of Jumièges, William of Apulia, and Geoffrey of Malaterra, and like the later Icelandic kings' sagas, Orderic's work portrays and records history as a series of exceptional individual lives (OVI, 77–9).

A modern historian is immediately struck by the great freedom Orderic enjoyed in being able to choose among his sources. He combined, summarized, paraphrased, included or excluded any written accounts which came his way as he saw fit. Orderic either used, cited, or mentioned over a hundred

different sources in the course of writing his *Ecclesiastical History*. He knew some of these sources very well and cited them directly. Others he merely paraphrased, and still others he came to know second hand, by their being mentioned in other historical texts (OVI, 48). To regard differing written sources as essentially complementing one another, then conflating their best parts, is a method of writing which was ultimately derived from Augustine (OVI, 51). By the Middle Ages this technique of combining pre-existing sources had been expanded to include oral accounts as well. Twelfth-century Icelandic saga authors probably did not have access to libraries as well-stocked as those available to Orderic. But Orderic's method of obtaining information by delving into written sources, and supplementing them with oral accounts from people who were in a position to have known better, is a method very similar to that described by Adam of Bremen, Theodoricus, and Snorri Sturluson in the prefaces to their works. It is a method which was employed by Oddr Snorrason and Gunnlaugr Leifsson as well.

A single episode from Orderic's history gives a good illustration of a twelfth-century historian at work. Orderic demonstrably used John of Worcester as a source for his own *Ecclesiastical History*, and Orderic possibly even met John while visiting England (OVII, xxi, xxv, 186–189). But when describing the death of Hugh of Montgomery (Earl of Shrewsbury, "the Proud") at the hands of marauding Norwegians under the command of King Magnús berfoettr in 1098, Orderic departs from his written sources and gives a version much at odds with the account of John, who states directly that the fatal arrow had been "discharged by the king's own hand" ("mox ab ipso rege sagitta percussus" [JW III, 88]). Orderic however, is the only writer among Continental or British historians to excuse King Magnús from having been the actual perpetrator. He goes to great lengths in doing so, stating that the culprit was one of the men under the king's command and not the king himself, and he gives a dramatic account of King Magnús lamenting Hugh's death (OVV, 224–5).

The Old Norse tradition as attested in *Ágrip* (68–69), *Morkinskinna* (319) and *Heimskringla* (Hkr III, 222) corroborates Orderic's version of the event. None of the written sources which were available to him indicates that King Magnús was innocent, but the later Old Norse versions show that Orderic had nevertheless possessed better, almost certainly oral information, which he did not hesitate to include (OVI, 31). Furthermore, Orderic does not stop at stating correctly the essentials of who was killed by whom. His dramatic account of Magnús' sorrow is obviously embroidered to impress his audience. The tendency not just to recount facts, but to tell the tale well, is a feature which characterizes both Orderic's work and the kings' sagas (see Note 2).

The confirmation of Orderic's version of the death of Hugh the Proud by later Scandinavian historical works is significant. The case for the existence of a pilgrim route for Scandinavians which led to Rome through Normandy was made by Otto Springer. Scandinavians are known to have traveled widely throughout Western Europe on pilgrimages and to have been educated at schools on the Continent and in England. It would not be surprising if Orderic had come into contact with Icelanders or Norwegians in Normandy who told him a different version of Hugh's death. It is also possible, however, that originally Norman oral and written historical accounts could have been brought to the North by means of these same travelers (Sigurður Nordal 1953, 208; Gade 1997; White 1999).

The glimpse of Orderic Vitalis at work shows how the earliest writers of kings' sagas could have approached their task, and it also shows why the migration of literary material to Iceland is difficult to trace with precision. Oral information could range from a factual eyewitness account to quoting or paraphrasing a literary source once heard or read. In addition, extant Icelandic manuscripts are almost always copies of copies, with each new redactor displaying the tendency, like Orderic, to put his own construction on a particular story (Lönnroth 1975, 34). Even when dealing exclusively with written sources, direct word-for-word correspondences between Latin and Norse texts, such as similarities in diction and syntax, can seldom be established. How are we, then, to determine the exact provenance of literary accounts found in the Icelandic kings' sagas?

Shedding any new light on potential literary borrowings in the kings' sagas of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century might seem a daunting task considering our only partial understanding of the circumstances surrounding the origins of the kings' sagas in Iceland. Clear proof will be rare. But it is nevertheless possible to accumulate evidence concerning the sources of borrowed literary motifs and stories in the Icelandic kings' sagas. Helpful sources include the many accounts preserved in the bishops' sagas and the contemporary sagas documenting the journeys by Icelanders and Norwegians to the Continent and England in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They traveled on pilgrimages, to conduct trade, to execute diplomatic assignments and, especially important for this investigation, to acquire their educations. Often these later accounts place individual Icelanders or Norwegians who are known to have been of key importance for the growth of Icelandic literature at important European centers of religious and secular learning. Another fact to consider is the size, extent, and fraternal nature of individual monastic orders, especially the Benedictine, at this time. Traveling clerics tended to associate and reside with members of their brother communities, and the

Benedictine monasteries in particular possessed large libraries both in England and on the Continent. Manuscripts found in the monastic libraries would have been read, borrowed, copied, or bought by visitors there. A close look at the journeys of Icelanders and Norwegians to England and the Continent, in conjunction with a close analysis of written sources, will help determine when and where non-native literary material was acquired.

ICELANDERS ABROAD IN THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES

Throughout the Middle Ages, there was lively mercantile activity between Scandinavia and the Continent and Britain. The Norwegian merchant Ohtere or Óttarr described to King Alfred the route he traveled from Norway to England sometime around the year 890 (*AG* 39 n.39). There are many references to merchants and merchant voyages in the Icelandic Annals, and a receipt for the sale of an Icelandic ship and its cargo in Rouen in 1198 is still extant (*Magni rotuli* II, 306). While evidence of this kind testifies to frequent travel between Scandinavia and Western Europe in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, mercantile ventures were conducted for profit, and were not the most likely occasion for the transmission of literature. But one of these voyages provides an example of the ease with which travel between Iceland and other European countries could be conducted at the time. The farmer Markús Gíslason of Saurbœr made a trip to Norway ca. 1180 and had wood cut for a church. After returning to Iceland, he gave the wood to Sigmundur Ormsson to build a church at Valbjófsstaðr. Around the year 1190 he made a pilgrimage to Rome, and returned via England, where he bought some church bells. He brought these bells with him to Norway, where he again had wood cut to build a church. He returned to Iceland where he donated the wood and bells for the construction of a church at Rauðasandr before he was killed in a fight on Nov. 3, 1196 (*Bsk* I, 645; Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 755–6).

Markús' journey shows that materials of all kinds could be transported to Iceland in the late twelfth century. It also suggests that, with the possible exception of trade, religion was the most common impetus for members of the various social strata of Iceland to journey abroad. Icelanders visited many pilgrimage sites in Western Europe such as the shrine of St. James de Compostella in Spain, or that of Archbishop Thomas à Becket in Canterbury (Leach 1909, 549), or St. Egidius near Toulouse. One Icelandic, Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, visited all three of these sites in 1195–6 (*Bsk* I, 641–3; Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 808). Many Icelanders also traveled to the city of Rome, or even to the Holy Land itself. Abbot Nikulás Bergsson of Pverá wrote a

description of the two most common pilgrim routes from Northern Europe through Central Europe and into Italy in his *Leiðarvísir og borgaskipun*, which was written ca. 1155–58 and describes a pilgrimage probably made in 1153–4 (Magoun 1944, 315; Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 799–801; Einar Arnórsson 1954–58, 9). The sources make it clear that, after Iceland and Norway had been christianized, there was at least a steady trickle, if not a constant stream, of devout Norwegians and Icelanders traveling these pilgrim routes. Traveling pilgrims, with their constant stops and stayovers at monastic houses along the way, would be very likely to be exposed to the products of Western European education, especially if these travelers were of the upper classes and educated. However, the majority of these pilgrims were not educated, and the bishops' sagas give us few details of the pilgrimages made by those who were.

The references to Icelanders and Norwegians who traveled to Germany, France, and England with the specific purpose of being educated there promise to be most fruitful for this investigation. In the case of the Icelanders especially, the impact of any education or knowledge of written materials acquired abroad would have been immediate. Icelandic scholars were typically members of the same uppermost stratum of Icelandic society which was most influential in matters of law and religion. After returning to Iceland, these scholars often became prominent members of society, the church, and the intellectual community, and they were frequently associated closely with known centers of early literary activity in Iceland.

The earliest known of these traveling scholars was Ísleifr Gizurarson (1006–1080), the son of Gizurr hvíti, who was partially responsible for Iceland's conversion to Christianity in the year 1000. His son Ísleifr attended school at Herford in Westphalia in the diocese of Paderborn in the 1020s. Herford was flourishing at the time and had religious ties with a series of influential monastic houses including Hildesheim, Corvey, and Reichenau (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 780; Foote 1975, 58; Schmid 1965, 20, 37). Ísleifr returned to Iceland as a priest. He settled at his family's farm at Skálholt until he left for Rome to be consecrated Iceland's first native bishop in the year 1055. On his way south, he supposedly met and stayed with Emperor Henry III and made a gift to him of a polar bear from Greenland (*Bsk* I, 61; Köhne 1972, 29–32). Ísleifr was consecrated in Rome by Pope Victor II on May 26, 1056. He returned to Iceland in the summer of 1057 (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 780–1). *Hungrvaka* mentions several foreign clergymen who came to Iceland before and during the days of Bishop Ísleifr. These include a Bishop Friðrekr, Bishop Jón the Irishman, Bishop Bjarnvarðr Vilráðsson "the bookwise," Bishop Heinrich, and Bjarnharðr the German (*Bsk* I, 64–5). There was

another missionary named Rúðólfr from England who lived nineteen years in Iceland and later died an abbot in Abingdon, England, in 1052 (Foote 1975, 59). Since the C version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is thought to have been written at Abingdon around 1050 (Dickens 1937–8, 56), Rúðólfr might be the person ultimately responsible for the extremely early reference in that version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to Óláfr Haraldsson as “holy” (“hálig”) in the entry under the year 1030 (ASCI, 290). It is likely due to former English missionaries such as Rúðólfr that the earliest surviving texts to commemorate St. Óláfr are English (Dickens 1937–8, 56 n.2; Abrams 1995, 223–4 n.52, 248 n.190). Unfortunately nothing more is known about these early bishops and their possible contributions to the rise of Icelandic literacy.

Ísleifr's son, Gizurr, studied in “Saxony” (“Saxland”) as well (*Bsk* I, 66), having been sent there by his father, probably to the same school in Herford. Gizurr was later chosen to succeed his father as bishop. He journeyed to Rome, met Pope Gregory VII, and was consecrated by archbishop Hartwig in Magdeburg in 1082. Gizurr returned to Iceland in 1083 and succeeded his father as bishop of the Icelanders. He gave his family land to the bishopric of Skálholt as a perpetual episcopal residence, and founded a school there. His students included Kolr Þorkelsson, later bishop in Norway, and Jón Ögmundarson. Gizurr established a second Episcopal see in Iceland at Hólar with Jón Ögmundarson as its first diocesan (*Sturl* 204).

Jón Ögmundarson (1052–1121) was consecrated bishop of Hólar in 1106, after having been educated and ordained by Bishop Ísleifr at Skálholt. He traveled extensively as a young man, and while doing so found his kinsman Sæmundr Sigfússon immersed in his studies in “Francia” (“Frakkland”) in 1076 (*Bsk* I, 227–8). Upon his return to Iceland, Jón founded a school at the cathedral church at Hólar and laid the foundation for the monastery at Þingeyrar (*Bsk* I, 171, 235, 244), where Oddr Snorrason and Gunnlaugr Leifsson would later write their sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason. In 1105 Jón traveled to Lund and later to Rome to get dispensation from Pope Pascal II for his two previous marriages. He was consecrated in Lund on April 26, 1106, and became the first of six Icelandic bishops consecrated there until the foundation of the Norwegian metropolitan see at Niðaróss in 1152 (Leach 1909, 534 n.18). He returned to Iceland and resided at Hólar. Interestingly, the “arch-priest” (“erkiprestr”) at Jón's school was a man named “Rikini” and is described as “franzeis” (*Bsk* I, 168, 173, 239, 246). The exact nationality of this man is an open question (Foote 1975, 64), but his presence at Hólar shows that educated Europeans visited Iceland from the Continent. While it is logical to assume that Jón and Rikini would have acquired books on the

Continent if they intended to found a school, this is not plainly stated (Björn Sigfússon 1944, 76). As far as Rikini is concerned, “Jóns saga” tells us only that he was a “most educated man” (“hinn mesti lærdómsmaðr” [*Bsk* I, 168]).

The importance of Jón's school was great. In addition to writing his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason Gunnlaugr Leifsson also wrote a Latin *vita* of the later Saint Jón. This work is no longer extant, but much of what he had written, including his description of Jón's school, survives in later Icelandic redactions of “Jóns saga” (Foote 1975, 54). Gunnlaugr praises the quality of the instruction at Hólar, and writes: “Here one could see around all the buildings of the bishop's seat much business and activity: some read holy writings, some wrote, some sang, some memorized, some taught” (“Hér mátti sjá um öll hús biskupsstólins mikla iðn ok athöfn: sumir lásu heil[a]gar ritníngar, sumir rituðu, sumir sungu, sumir námu, sumir kenndu” [*Bsk* I, 240]).

While we should be careful not to take Gunnlaugr's praise of his monastery's patron saint Jón and his school at face value, Gunnlaugr did know some of Jón's former students personally, and he names them. People educated in Jón's school included Vilmundr Þórólfsson, first abbot of Þingeyrar (1133–d.1148), Björn Gilsson, third bishop of Hólar (1147–62), Bishop Klcengr Þorsteinsson of Skálholt (1152–d.1176), and Hreinn Styrmissón, third abbot of Þingeyrar (d.1171). Bjarni Bergþórsson “the number wise” (“inn tölvisi”) deserves to be mentioned as well, as his twelfth-century tract on astronomy still survives and testifies to the quality and diversity of the instruction at Jón's school (Turville-Petre 1953, 112). Bjarni is also named by Gunnlaugr as one of his informants for his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason (*Flat* I, 517). Another indication of the excellence of the education which could be obtained at Hólar is found in Gunnlaugr's affectionate description of the nun Íngunn the virgin (*Bsk* I, 241):

Öngum þessum var hon lægri í sögðum bóklístum, kenndi hon mörgum grammaticam ok fræddi hvern er nema vildi; urðu því margir val mentir undir hennar hendi. Hon rætti mjök latínubæk, svá at hon lét lesa fyrir sér, en hon sjálf saumaði, tefldi, eða [vann] aðrar hannyrðir með heilagra manna sögum.

(She was no less [accomplished] than any of them in the aforementioned arts of book-learning. She taught grammar to many and taught each person who wanted to learn. Therefore many became well educated in her hands. She often corrected Latin writings by having them read before her, while she herself sewed, played chess, or performed other feminine tasks accompanied by the stories of holy men.)

Other kinds of books were available at Jón's school as well. "Jóns saga" tells us that Bishop Jón once caught the young Klængr Þorsteinsson reading Ovid's "de arte" (*Ars amatoria*) and forbade him to read such materials in the future (*Bsk* I, 165 n. 3).

The most famous of the Icelanders known to have studied abroad is Sæmundr Sigfússon (1056–1133), known to later generations as "the wise." When referring to the period 1076–83, Ari writes of him: "In those days Sæmundr Sigfússon came [back] north to this country from 'France' and let himself be consecrated a priest" ("Á þeim dögum kom Sæmundr Sigfússon sunnan af Frakklandi hingat til lands ok lét síðan vígjask til prests" [*Ísl* 20–21]). Sæmundr is known to have written one of the first histories, or perhaps more accurately, genealogies, of the Norwegian kings, and his works are cited as authoritative by later saga authors. The extent of Sæmundr's education later reached almost mythic proportions, and the author of *Hungrvaka* refers to him as "wise and best educated of all men" ("forvitra [sic] ok lærðr allra manna bezt" [*Bsk* I, 67]). Ari Þorgilsson himself submitted his *Íslendingabók* to Sæmundr for emendation (*Ísl* 3). It is uncertain exactly where Sæmundr studied, or what Ari meant by "Frakkland." This term has traditionally been translated as "France," but Peter Foote has argued that it could also apply to the Rhineland (Foote 1975, 69–73). This definition makes sense when one recalls that Sæmundr's predecessors Ísleifr Gizurarsson and Gizurr Ísleifsson had both studied in Westphalia in Germany, and that there was a large amount of Scandinavian traffic on the Rhine at this time (Bächtold 1910, 264). Sæmundr was related to these first two bishops and lived close to them in the south of Iceland (Foote 1975, 68–71).

We can only speculate what kind of books Sæmundr and Jón might have brought back from the Continent. But like Gizurr Ísleifsson, who founded the school at Skálholt, and Jón Ögmundarson, who founded his school at Hólar, Sæmundr founded a school at Oddi (Bjarni Einarsson 1971, 29), where Snorri Sturluson later studied. Thus by the end of the eleventh century there were three main schools in Iceland, and some kind of library must have existed at the heart of each of them.

Hallr Teitsson was elected bishop of Skálholt in 1149, but died at Utrecht in 1150 while returning from his confirmation in Rome. Hallr must have been an educated and well-traveled man, because the author of *Hungrvaka* reports (probably based on information given to him by Hallr's son Gizurr Hallsson) that Hallr was quite a linguist and "spoke the tongue of every land he came to as if he had been born there" ("ok mælti allstaðar þeirra máli, sem hann væri allstaðar þar barnfæddr, sem þá kom hann" [*Bsk* I, 80]). Hallr's son, Gizurr Hallsson (1125–July 27, 1206), was born in Haukadalr

but was brought up at Skálholt by Bishop Þorlákr Rúnólfsson, a friend of Ari Þorgilsson. In his later years Gizurr lived in Haukadalr, but he spent his youth traveling in "southern lands" until 1152. He visited Rome, and *Sturlunga saga* tells us that he "was better esteemed in Rome than any other Icelander before him because of his education and excellence" ("ok var betr metinn í Róma, en nokkurr annarr íslenzkr maðr hafði verit fyrir hann, af ment sinni ok framkvæmð" [*Sturl* 206]). His travels are reckoned to have taken place between the years 1144 and 1152 (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 799). Gizurr became lawspeaker in 1181, a post he retained for 22 years. He spent much time in his latter years at Skálholt. Like Sæmundr, Gizurr was an exceptionally learned man and was considered an authority in his own day. Gunnlaugr Leifsson submitted his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason to Gizurr for emendation (*Flat* I, 517), and the author of *Hungrvaka* cites Gizurr as his oral source for the lives of the Icelandic bishops (*Bsk* I, 59). Gizurr was an author himself and wrote a no longer extant Latin work called **Flos Peregrinationis* about his travels in the south (*Sturl* 206). Some scholars have also suspected Gizurr of being the author of *Veraldar saga*, a chronicle of the history of the world based primarily on the histories of Bede and Isidor (Paasche 1957, 318–19; de Vries 1964, II, 194). An eloquent man, Gizurr presided over the funeral of Bishop Þorlákr (1193) after having seen four others buried ("Fimm biskupar hafa hér verit niðr settir at mér hjáveranda" [*Bsk* I, 299]). The other four bishops were Þorlákr (d. Feb. 1133); Ketill of Hólar (d. July 1145); Magnús (d. Oct. 1149) and Klængr (d. March 1176) (*Sturl* ccxiv; Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 798).

Ingimundr Þorgeirsson is an interesting figure who testifies to the literacy which was becoming ever more widespread among the members of the upper classes in Iceland. A priest in the Northern district, he attempted to travel to Norway in 1180, but was shipwrecked, and we are told that he almost lost a case of books, which later drifted to shore (*Bsk* I, 422–4). He left Iceland again in 1182, arrived in Norway and became a friend of Archbishop Eysteinn of Niðaróss. "Guðmundar saga" tells us that on the occasion of Guðmundr's consecration as priest, Ingimundr gave him his best and most learned books ("En Ingimundr prestur gaf honum bækr þær allar, er hann átti beztar ok fróðastar" [*Sturl* 102]). After the death of archbishop Eysteinn in 1188, Ingimundr traveled on a merchant voyage to England and returned with wine, honey, wheat, clothing, and "much else" ("margs annars" [*Bsk* I, 433; *Sturl* 105]). When one considers Ingimundr's obvious love of reading, it is likely that "margs annars" included books. In 1189 Ingimundr attempted to return to Iceland from Norway. Nothing was heard of him for 14 years, until his body and the bones of six others were found in Greenland. According to "Guðmundar saga" a wax tablet was found next to him, on

which he had inscribed in runes the story of their shipwreck (*Sturl* 106–7; *Bsk* I, 435).

Þorlákr Þorhallsson (1133–93) was the son of Þórhallr Þorláksson, who had been a traveling merchant before settling down as a farmer. Þorlákr first studied at Oddi with the priest Eyjólfir Sæmundarson, the son of Sæmundr the wise. Then he studied for six years abroad, first in Paris, and then in Lincoln during the years 1153–59 (*Bsk* I, 89–92; Bjarni Einarsson 1971, 29). Perhaps owing to influence from the Victorines in Paris, he became a member of the Augustinian order, and in 1168 he became the first abbot of the oldest Icelandic Augustinian monastery, Þykkvibær (*KL* 20, 386). Þorlákr was later chosen to succeed Kloengr as bishop of Skálholt in 1174, but he was not consecrated until July 2, 1178, by Archbishop Eysteinn of Niðaróss (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 756; *Bsk* I, 99–100, 272–4). His saga mentions how Þorlákr loved to read and write (*Bsk* I, 103), and it also describes how Þorlákr “loved to hear stories and poems and all kinds of string music and instruments and the conversation of sensible people” (“Hann henti skemtan at sögum ok kvæðum ok at öllum strengleikum ok ljóðfærum, ok at hygginna manna ræðum” [*Bsk* I, 109]). Already literate before he left Iceland, Þorlákr is just the kind of person who would have brought back works of literature and history from Paris and Lincoln to Iceland. It is likely that Þorlákr's tenure as bishop marks the beginning of the Skálholt school's orientation toward French and English, as opposed to German cultural influence (Bjarni Einarsson 1971, 30). Þorlákr was declared a national saint in 1198.

Jón Loptsson (d. 1197) was the son of Loptir Sæmundarson, and he was thus the grandson of Sæmundr the wise on his father's side. He lived at Oddi, the site of his estate and Sæmundr's school. Jón traveled to Norway in the years 1163–4, and again in 1171, and he was a friend of King Magnús Erlingsson (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 802), but this short description of Jón's travels abroad does not convey the importance of this man to the growth of saga literature in Iceland. Jón was the most powerful and well-born man in Iceland in the middle of the twelfth century (*Bsk* I, 132). On his mother's side, Jón was the grandson of the Norwegian king Magnús berfœttr (*Hkr* III, 395; *Bsk* I, 127). Modern scholars know Jón Loptsson as the man who fostered Snorri Sturluson at his estate at Oddi. Jón was married to Ragnheiðr, the sister of the later saint Þorlákr Þorhallsson. Their son was Páll Jónsson (1155–1211).

Páll traveled abroad while in his twenties, first to the Orkneys, and later to England where he is said to have studied. This was probably in Lincoln, the school where his uncle Þorlákr had studied. When he returned to Iceland (ca. 1180) he was esteemed for his extensive knowledge in composing Latin verse

and for his knowledge of books (“þá var hann fyrir öllum mönnum öðrum að kurteisi lærdóms síns, versagjörð ok bókalist” [*Bsk* I, 127]). In 1194 he was chosen to succeed his uncle Þorlákr as bishop and was consecrated in Lund on April 23, 1195 by Archbishop Absalon, in the presence of Archbishop Eiríkr, who had fled Norway's King Sverrir. While in Norway he met and traveled with King Sverrir until returning to Iceland in the summer with two church bells. Upon his return, he succeeded his uncle Þorlákr as bishop of Skálholt (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 806–7; *Bsk* I, 128–31).

Another Icelander who deserves to be mentioned is Karl Jónsson (d. 1213). Karl became abbot of Þingeyrar in 1169. He traveled to Norway in 1185 and met King Sverrir before returning in 1188–89 (Sigurður Nordal 1953, 197). According to the prologue of *Sverris saga* the first part of that saga was written by abbot Karl Jónsson while “King Sverrir himself sat and counseled what he should write” (“en yfir sat sjálfr Sverrir konungur ok réð fyrir hvat rita skyldi” [*Ss* 1]). The historical figure of Karl Jónsson thus epitomizes the larger phenomenon of well-educated Icelandic clerics, who at one and the same time were associated with prominent religious communities, and who were also involved in the writing of early kings' sagas.

NORWEGIANS ABROAD IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY

Saga writing did not become established in Norway as it did in Iceland. The corpus of extant Norwegian royal biographies is limited to three Norwegian synoptic histories: the Latin *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* by the monk Theodoricus, which is dated to ca. 1180, the anonymous Latin *Historia Norwegiae*, which is variously dated to sometime between 1178 and 1220, and the anonymous Old Norse *Ágrip*, which is dated to ca. 1190 (Andersson 1985, 201). There are no sagas of Norwegian bishops, clerics, or potential saga writers, and we are dependent on non-native sources to account for the movements of Norwegians abroad. References to Norwegians who are relevant to early saga writing are few, but worthy of investigation.

The Augustinian monastery of St. Victor outside of Paris was one of the preeminent centers of learning in Western Europe in the twelfth century. It is believed to have been here that Þorlákr Þorhallsson studied when his saga tells us that he “studied in Paris” (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14, 802; *Bsk* I, 92). Norwegians came south to the monastery to study as well. The names of Bishop Þórir of Hamar (d. 1196), Eiríkr (1189–1206, d. 1213), successor to Archbishop Eysteinn of Niðaróss, and Archbishop Þórir of Niðaróss (d. 1214), Eiríkr's successor, appear in the monastery's necrology, where they have been latinized to Theodoricus and Henricus (Bogi Melsteð 1912–14,

796, Bekker-Nielsen 1965, 32–3, Johnsen 1943–46, 411, n.2). Both Þórir's have been suspected of being the same Theodoricus who was author of the *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensum* because Theodoricus' work allegedly displays close connections with the school and teachings of Hugh of St. Victor (Johnsen 1943–46, 405, 420–424). Interestingly, the English abbot of St. Victor, Ernis (1162–72), had a sister who was married to a well-born Norwegian. From a surviving letter to the abbot, we know that Ernis' sister and her son Geirmundr visited Abbot Ernis, and, according to another letter, at least three other Norwegians named Peter, Salomon, and Johannes visited abbot Ernis as well (Johnsen 1943–46, 410).

The only other Norwegian known to have left his country and visited another center of learning in Europe is Eysteinn, the founder of the cathedral of St. Óláfr in Niðaróss. Eysteinn fled to England in 1180, and his presence at the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds is mentioned by Jocelin of Brakelond (15) and Roger of Hoveden (*RH* II, 214). A certain amount of literary activity is connected with Eysteinn's stay in England. A twelfth-century English manuscript (Oxford, Corpus Christ College 209, ff. 57r–90r) contains a text of the "Passio et Miracula Beati Olai," the composition of which is commonly attributed to Eysteinn or a member of his entourage, and is the fullest extant Latin account of the martyrdom and miracles of St. Óláfr (Dickens 1937–8, 59; Leach 1909, 535; Sigurður Nordal 1914, 134).

As meager as our knowledge of the movements of twelfth-century Norwegian scholars and clerics is, their contribution to the later Icelandic kings' sagas is significant. If Theodoricus studied at St. Victor, as the monastery's necrology and Theodoricus' own references to the *Historia Normannorum* (*MHN* 22), Sigebert of Gembloux, and Hugh of St. Victor (*MHN* 3–4) make likely, we have at least one traceable path of European literary influence on the kings' sagas. Theodoricus' *Historia* was demonstrably used as a source by Gunnlaugr and Oddr for their sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason, and it was also used by the author of *Ágrip*. All of these in turn became sources for later saga writers including Snorri Sturluson (Andersson 1985, 201–205). The fact that Theodoricus studied in France and returned to Norway to write his history, citing source material he had read while abroad, is helpful in understanding the growth of historical literature in Iceland. Since Theodoricus' *Historia* became a source for *Ágrip*, which in turn became a source for Snorri's *Heimskringla*, we have a verifiable example of how later saga writers, for their own purposes, continued to sift through, cite, and rework already existing written source material, some of it of ultimately foreign origin. It is clear, however, that Theodoricus cited most of his sources from memory, and he did not have access to much written material (Hanssen 1949a, 73). He refers to a

Catalogus regum Norwagiensium, but scholars today do not know what this was (Andersson 1985, 202). The monks at Þingeyrar and the scholars at Hólar and Oddi certainly had more written sources at their disposal than did Theodoricus.

We have identified four different centers of learning on the Continent and England where prominent Norwegians and Icelanders either acquired their educations or at least spent some time. In the eleventh century the Icelanders Ísleifr Gizurarson and his son Gizurr Ísleifsson studied at Herford in Paderborn, Germany. In the twelfth century Þorlákr Þorhallsson and very likely the Norwegian Theodoricus studied at the Augustinian monastery of St. Victor near Paris. Þorlákr, and almost certainly his nephew Páll Jónsson, two of the most educated men in late twelfth-century Iceland, also studied at Lincoln in England. Finally Eysteinn, Archbishop of Niðaróss, can be placed at Bury St. Edmunds in England in 1180.

These few documented journeys by Scandinavians to educational institutions in Western Europe represent only a fraction of a much larger wave of clerics and scholars whom the contemporary sagas fail to mention (Leach 1909, 555). Even though he is named, we do not know what Jón Ögmundarson was doing in "Frakkland" when he encountered his kinsman Sæmundr. Nor do we know where Sæmundr was studying when Jón met him. But the fact that Jón and Ríkini came to Iceland and established a school at Hólar, and that Sæmundr did the same at Oddi, indicates that these men were involved in an intellectual endeavor which must have included the acquisition of learned works of literature. It is not known what kinds of books they were most interested in acquiring. Ísleifr and Gizurr trained clerics at Skálholt in the period following the conversion to Christianity. The educational materials needed by these men would have been predominantly religious in nature. Expositions of the gospels, saints' lives, and Latin grammars were fundamental to promoting Christianity and thus indispensable to any medieval library (Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 14).

By the twelfth century, however, such basic works must have been acquired, and literary tastes and academic endeavors had become more diverse. Hallr Teitson had studied and traveled widely enough to become fluent in several languages, and Bjarni Bergþórsson could write about astronomy. The young Kloengr Þorsteinsson had been reproached for reading Ovid, and Gizurr Hallsson's erudition was not only sufficient to earn him respect in Rome, but secular enough in nature that Gunnlaugr Leifsson submitted his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason to him for emendation. Ingimundr Þorgeirsson is mentioned twice in connection with collections of books, first when he almost lost his chest of books in a shipwreck, and again when he made a gift of

books to Guðmundr Arason. It is unlikely that all these books were strictly religious. The existence of *Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók*, Eiríkr Oddsson's *Hryggjarstykki, Ari's and Sæmundr's genealogies of the Norwegian kings, and Karl Jónsson's *Sverris saga* indicates that Icelanders enjoyed reading and hearing about both secular and religious affairs. This is confirmed by the later literary products of the monastery at Pingeyrar: Gunnlaugr wrote both a Vita of the monastery's patron saint Jón Ögmundarson and a life of the Norwegian king Óláfr Tryggvason.

We should picture the dissemination of Western European literature to Iceland by means of returning scholars and pilgrims as a continual process which gradually and constantly enriched the libraries of the monastic houses and schools in Iceland from the eleventh century through the thirteenth century. The process of acquiring literature was facilitated by family connections. In addition to being the keeper of the school and library established by Sæmundr at Oddi, Jón Loptsson was the brother-in-law of Þorlákr Þorhallson and the father of Páll Jónsson. He surely knew which literary works Þorlákr and Páll had read, excerpted, copied, or bought in Lincoln or Paris. It is not unlikely that as keeper of what was possibly the best library in Iceland, Jón indicated to these two men which literary materials he wished to acquire before they left the country.

As the libraries became more complete, the Icelandic schools and monasteries became more important for copying, creating, and further disseminating literature to other monasteries and religious houses on the island. The scholars and clerics who had access to the contents of the libraries in Iceland in the second half of the twelfth century now had the means to augment native literary traditions and create larger works of their own. Ever striving to tell stories which were morally edifying but also entertaining and informative, Icelandic clerics wrote both religious and secular works, as well as works which combined features of both traditions. The following investigation will analyze the content of the kings' sagas while keeping a close eye on what is known about the contents of English and Continental libraries, and about Scandinavians who traveled there. In this manner, it may prove possible to shed more light on the question of which works of European historical literature were known in late twelfth-century Iceland and came to be used as sources for the kings' sagas.

THE VARIOUS TEXTS OF THE KINGS' SAGAS

In this section I shall provide an overview of the extant primary texts which contain versions of the sagas of the Norwegian kings, and which will be the

focus of the present study. There were several distinct stages in the evolution of the kings' sagas. The first is the period of the earliest Icelandic historians, Ari Þorgilsson and Sæmundr Sigfússon, who wrote in the first half of the twelfth century. Sæmundr's work is no longer extant (see above), but a discussion of Ari's *Íslendingabók*, although it is a history of the Icelanders, is relevant to the later kings' sagas. The second identifiable period is that of the synoptic historians who wrote in the second half of the twelfth century. This stage is represented by the monk Theodoricus' *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* and the anonymous texts *Agrip* and *Historia Norwegiae*. With the exception of *Agrip* all of these early texts contain information derived from Continental and Insular sources, and they all influenced the later writers of kings' sagas, either directly or indirectly (Andersson 1985, 203–09). The third stage in the evolution of the kings' sagas is the period of the composition of the first separate sagas of individual kings: the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason and St. Óláfr Haraldsson, which were first written down at the end of the twelfth century. The last stage that will be discussed in this study is the period of the great compendia, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*, which were all compiled roughly between the years 1220 and 1235 (Andersson 1985, 216–17).

Ari's *Íslendingabók*

There was a great deal of foreign influence on Old Norse literature from the very beginning of the period of literacy in Iceland. The characters of the Icelandic alphabet were created in imitation of Anglo-Saxon orthography (Spehr 1929, 157–9; Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 14), and already by the time of Ari Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók*, composed sometime between 1122 and 1132, the influence of English and Continental sources can be seen (see Chapter 2). There were two redactions of Ari's *Íslendingabók*. In his prologue Ari states that he first wrote one version, and after showing it to bishops Þorlákr and Ketill, as well as to Sæmundr the priest, he composed a second redaction, adding more recent information and leaving out the "áttartal" and "konunga ævi" (genealogies and lives of the Norwegian kings [*Ísl* 3]). The older version of *Íslendingabók* was used by Snorri Sturluson and is referred to by him in the prologue to *Heimskringla* (KL 7, 493; *Hkr* I, 3–7). Unfortunately Ari's earliest works are no longer extant, and a large amount of scholarship has been devoted to the attempt to reconstruct their content and to calculate their influence on the later kings' sagas (Andersson 1985, 200–01). Ari's *Íslendingabók* established the tradition of writing literature in the vernacular in Iceland, and this, together with the fact that later authors of kings' sagas considered Ari's writings to be authoritative and that they followed his

system of dating, makes a discussion of Ari's work relevant to an investigation of the various foreign sources used by later authors of kings' sagas.

Theodoricus' *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*

The original Latin synoptic history of Norway written by the monk Theodoricus is no longer extant. A parchment manuscript containing the history was found in Lübeck by the librarian Johannes Kirchmann sometime between the years 1620 and 1625. Kirchmann copied the manuscript before his death, and an edition was published by Kirchmann's grandson Bernard C. Kirchmann in 1684. Since that time the original manuscript, as well as Kirchmann's copy of it, have disappeared. (*MHN* iv-v). Very little is known for certain about Theodoricus other than his name and that he was a Norwegian monk. His *Historia* begins with a description of the reign of Haraldr hárfagri and ends with the death of Sigurðr Jórsalafari, but it also contains many digressions and references to contemporary events in Norway. Much has been written about these digressions in the attempt to ascertain Theodoricus' identity and where he might have acquired his education (Johnsen 1939, 15–94; Hanssen 1945; Hanssen 1949a; Bagge 1989, 114–15). There is a consensus that Theodoricus had studied abroad, possibly at the monastery of St. Victor in Paris (Johnson 1939, 37–60). The date of the composition of his *Historia* can be determined by his dedication of the work to Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson of Niðaróss (d. 1188), and by the fact that the last historical event mentioned by Theodoricus took place in 1176–77. Scholars thus date the composition of Theodoricus' work to sometime between 1177 and 1188 (Hanssen 1945, 164; 1949b, 3).

Historia Norwegiae

The anonymous work now known as the *Historia Norwegiae* (Hereafter *HN*) begins with a geographical description of Norway and its surrounding areas. It then lists the names of the Norwegian kings and describes their reigns from the mythical past to Óláfr Haraldsson's return to Norway from England in the company of four bishops in 1015. At this point the manuscript breaks off. Scholars know very little about the composition of the work. In the prologue the author dedicates the work to a certain "Agnellus" ("O Agnelle" [*MHN* 72]), but there is no consensus as to who this person was. Much has been written attempting to identify "Agnellus" and the *HN* author for the purpose of dating the work and determining its place of composition (Bugge 1873, 34–5; Storm 1873, 376–77; Koht 1919, 109–18; Hanssen 1949b, 13–23; Steinnes 1946–48, 38–49). *HN* is generally dated to either 1178 or 1220

(Andersson 1985, 201) but some scholars place its composition as early as 1152 (Hanssen 1949b, 3, 23, 28), 1195 (Steinnes 1946–48, 45–6), some time after 1224 (Finnur Jónsson 1928, 276), or as late as 1266 (Maurer 1875, 8–9; *MHN* xxiii–xxiv). One can only state with certainty that the manuscript, a copy of the original (ca. 1450; *MHN* xvii) was discovered by P. A. Munch in Edinburgh in 1849. Because of where *HN* was found, the extensive description of the Orkneys in the work (*MHN* 88–92), and other references to the Orkneys in the text (*MHN* 111–12), most scholars believe that *HN* was composed in the Orkneys, but arguments have also been advanced in favor of Norway (Storm 1873, 378, 383; Bugge 1873, 38–40) and Denmark (Steinnes 1946–48, 1–61).

Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum

A third synoptic history, the anonymous Norse text called *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum*, is preserved in a single Icelandic manuscript (AM 325 II 4to). The extant manuscript has been dated to the first quarter of the thirteenth century, but the original was probably composed ca. 1190 (Driscoll *Ágrip*, ix–xii). The text of *Ágrip* begins abruptly with a reference to Haraldr hárfagri and a description of the death of Hálfðan svarti around the year 880 and continues until it breaks off shortly after the accession of Ingi krókhrygg in 1136. Though the extant manuscript is Icelandic, it is commonly held that the original text was most likely Norwegian (Driscoll *Ágrip*, x–xi). *Ágrip* is textually related to both Theodoricus' *Historia* and *HN*. Close verbal correspondences demonstrate that the author of *Ágrip* borrowed directly from Theodoricus (Sigurður Nordal 1914, 25–9), and there are also textual correspondences between *Ágrip* and *HN*. Most scholars believe that *Ágrip* and *HN* made use of a common source, which was unavailable to Theodoricus (Bugge 1873, 2–11; Andersson 1985, 201–10), and it is at least possible that this source was the now lost "konunga ævi" of Ari (Ellehøj 1965, 276–85). It could also be, however, that the author of *Ágrip* knew and drew upon *HN* as well as on their common source (Indrebø 1922, 49, 64; Storm 1873, 366–70; Steinnes 1946–48, 36). Evidence for this view is found in the texts' various locations for the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason. *HN* follows Adam of Bremen in locating the battle near Seeland ("juxta Selandiam" [*MHN* 117] as discussed below in chapter 3. Although the author of *Ágrip* knew and used Theodoricus' *Historia*, which in accordance with the rest of Scandinavian tradition locates the battle near "Svöldr," the author of *Ágrip* departs from Theodoricus and also locates the battle "fyrir Sjólandi" (*Ágrip* 32), apparently in imitation of *HN*.

The Sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason by Oddr Snorrason
and Gunnlaugr Leifsson

The Benedictine house of Þingeyrar was founded in 1133 and was one of the oldest of the Icelandic monasteries. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries it was the main center of intellectual activity in northern Iceland if not in the whole country (Sigurður Nordal 1953, 199–200; Turville-Petre 1953, 190–92). The first saga of Óláfr Tryggvason was written by the monk Oddr Snorrason of Þingeyrar sometime around 1190. This date is determined by Oddr's own reference in the text to the Norwegian king Sverrir (ruled 1184–1202) for information pertaining to the battle at Svölðr (*Oddr* 226). Oddr's abbot at Þingeyrar, Karl Jónsson, is known to have traveled to Norway in 1184–85 where he met King Sverrir and began to write *Sverris saga* before returning to Iceland and his monastery in 1188–89 (Sigurður Nordal 1953, 197). Thus Oddr's information was most likely conveyed to him by his abbot, and Oddr wrote the saga after Karl Jónsson's return from Norway. Gudrun Lange has argued for an earlier dating of Oddr's saga (Lange 1989, 125–33), but since she introduces no additional evidence in support of her view, the traditional date of 1190 is still the most reliable one.

Oddr's saga was originally written in Latin and is no longer extant. Its content, however, can be reconstructed with a fair amount of certainty based on two surviving Icelandic translations and fragments of a third. The first manuscript, AM 310 4to (A) is believed to have been written in Norway in the second half of the thirteenth century. The second manuscript, Holm perg 18 4to (S) is of Icelandic origin, and is dated to approximately the year 1300. It is now located in the royal library in Stockholm. A third fragment, DG 4–7 (U), of Norwegian provenance from the middle of the thirteenth century, contains a version of the saga's conclusion, and is now located in Uppsala. Most scholars agree that all three manuscripts are derived from a single, now lost Icelandic exemplar which was an Icelandic translation of Oddr's Latin saga. The Icelandic translator is believed to have augmented Oddr's account with interpolations derived from *Ágrip* and with skaldic stanzas (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 55–59).

There existed another independent saga of Óláfr Tryggvason written at the end of the twelfth century by Gunnlaugr Leifsson (d. 1218–19), also a monk at Þingeyrar. This saga is preserved only in fragments, but its content can be reconstructed in part because selections of Gunnlaugr's saga were later included in the *Largest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason* compiled in the late thirteenth century, and best preserved in *Flateyjarbók* (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 271; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 91–96).

The sagas of Saint Óláfr Haraldsson

Several sagas commemorate the life and deeds of St. Óláfr Haraldsson. The "Oldest saga of St. Óláfr" exists only in fragments, but it is generally considered to have been the first saga written about Óláfr, perhaps at the monastery of Þingeyrar (Sigurður Nordal 1953, 200–01), and it is traditionally dated to ca. 1180 (*KL* 12, 546), although the exact date of its composition has been much debated (see below). The *Legendary saga* survives in one Norwegian manuscript from the middle of the thirteenth century (DG 8), but it was originally composed in Iceland at the beginning of the thirteenth century and made use of the "Oldest saga" (Jónas Kristjánsson 1976, 281–84, 293; Sigurður Nordal 1914, 165; Johnsen 1922, xiii–xv). Sometime prior to 1220 the monk and later abbot of the Augustinian monastery at Viðey, Styrmir Kárason the wise (d. 1245), also wrote a version of the life of St. Óláfr. Styrmir's saga only survives in fragments, but large parts of it were incorporated into the later *Óláfs saga hins helga hin mesta* (*Greatest saga of St. Óláfr*). Snorri Sturluson used the "Oldest saga" and Styrmir's saga, as well as skaldic poetry and other written materials, as sources for his own two versions of the saga of St. Óláfr (*KL* 12, 548). The first of these is known as the "Separate saga" and was composed between 1220–1230 (Sigurður Nordal 1953, 219). Snorri later incorporated a shortened version of that saga, "Óláfs saga helga," into his *Heimskringla* (see Chapter 4). The *Greatest saga of St. Óláfr*, mentioned above, was written at the beginning of the fourteenth century and drew on Styrmir's and Snorri's sagas as well as on other material composed about the saint (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 268–69; Andersson 1985, 212–15).

Scholars have disagreed about dates of composition of and the relationship between the various sagas of St. Óláfr. Until recently, the generally accepted view was that of Gustav Storm, first formulated in the edition of what he considered to be eight surviving fragments of the "Oldest saga of St. Óláfr." Storm believed that six extant fragments of the "Oldest saga" found in a Norwegian manuscript (NRA 52) and two additional fragments from an Icelandic manuscript (AM 325 IVa 4to) were all originally derived from a common parent manuscript which still survives in fragments and is also preserved in NRA 52. Storm dated the "Oldest saga" to sometime between 1150 and 1180 (Storm 1893, 22–23; Johnsen 1922, xxi; Jónas Kristjánsson 1976, 282). Sigurður Nordal dated the saga to between 1160 and 1185, but he accepted Storm's conclusions about the provenance of the eight fragments (Sigurður Nordal 1914, 48–54). Nordal argued for the existence of a later, now lost *Middle saga in which text of the "Oldest saga" had been interpolated with passages from *Fóstbræðra saga*. In his view, the *Middle saga was the

primary source used by later authors of sagas of St. Óláfr, such as Styrmir Kárasen, the author of the *Legendary saga*, and Snorri Sturluson (Sigurður Nordal 1914, 154; *KL* 12, 547–48; Johnsen 1922, xxi, xxiv–xxv).

More recent research has questioned this traditional view of the textual transmission of the sagas of St. Óláfr. Jónas Kristjánsson, for example, disputes the existence of a *Middle saga and regards the composition of the “Oldest saga” as being roughly contemporaneous with Oddr Snorrason’s and Gunnlaugr Leifsson’s sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason and Karl Jónsson’s *Sverris saga*, all of which were composed at the monastery of Þingeyrar sometime between the years 1190 and 1210 (Jónas Kristjánsson 1976, 281–93; Andersson 1985, 212–14). Whether one accepts the existence of a *Middle saga or not, there is still a consensus that some form of what we now know as the “Oldest saga” was used as a source by the author of the *Legendary saga* and by Styrmir Kárasen, and that the “Oldest saga” and Styrmir’s saga were in turn used by Snorri Sturluson. Therefore the debate has little impact on the identification of foreign literary influences on the various sagas of St. Óláfr.

The great compendia: *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*

Morkinskinna

There has been debate among scholars whether the sagas of the Norwegian kings from Magnús góði (ruled 1035–1047) through the sons of Magnús berfœttr (ruled 1103–1130) were first written as part of the early thirteenth-century Icelandic compilation of kings’ sagas now commonly known as *Morkinskinna* (“[the] rotten parchment”), a text which is still extant in one late thirteenth-century manuscript now kept in Copenhagen (GKS 1009 fol.). Since the main events of these kings’ reigns are also told in Theodoricus’ twelfth-century *Historia* and in Ágrip, it is certain that there existed oral historical traditions associated with them prior to *Morkinskinna*’s composition. Finnur Jónsson believed that separate written sagas of these kings existed in late twelfth-century Iceland as well, and that the *Morkinskinna* author compiled these independent written sagas into one text (*Msk* xxiv–xl). This possibility was repeated by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson in his prologue to *Heimskringla* (*Hsk* I, xvi–xviii). However, there is no evidence for early, independent written sagas about these kings, and other scholars incline toward the view that the sagas contained in *Morkinskinna* were originally written down by the *Morkinskinna* author (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 168; Ármann Jakobsson 1997, 31; Gade 1998, 56–7).

The manuscript is incomplete. *Morkinskinna* begins with a description of the early years of the life of Magnús góði and breaks off at the death of

Eysteinn Haraldsson in 1157. Because the text of *Morkinskinna* was used as a source by the anonymous author of *Fagrskinna* (written circa 1225, see below) and Snorri Sturluson for his *Heimskringla* (written circa 1230, see below), scholars agree that there once existed an older version of the extant text, which they commonly designate as the *Oldest Morkinskinna. There is further agreement that the *Oldest Morkinskinna was written sometime around the year 1220, and that it most likely arose out of a desire among authors of kings’ sagas to fill the historical gap which existed from the end of the reign of St. Óláfr Haraldsson in 1035 to the rise to power of King Sverrir in 1177 (Andersson and Gade 2000, 2, 64–7; *Msk* ix, xxxvii; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 135–36, 172–73).

Though the *Oldest Morkinskinna is no longer extant, much of its content can be reconstructed with a fair amount of certainty from the texts of *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* (Andersson and Gade 2000, 10–11; *Msk* xl; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 172–73). Native sources for *Morkinskinna* include Eiríkr Oddsson’s *Hryggjarstykki, *Knýtlinga saga*, *Ágrip*, various oral traditions, and several short, perhaps even written anecdotes concerning the exploits of individual Icelanders abroad called “þættir” (Andersson and Gade 2000, 13–15; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 135–62, *Msk* vii, xxxvi–xxxviii). There is, however, still a degree of uncertainty as to how closely the later *Morkinskinna* reproduces the *Oldest Morkinskinna. The large number of “þættir” and skaldic stanzas found in *Morkinskinna* but which do not appear in either *Heimskringla* or *Fagrskinna* suggest that the *Oldest Morkinskinna could have been heavily interpolated at some point in time between its being used as a source by the authors of *Fagrskinna* and *Heimskringla* and the time when the presently extant *Morkinskinna* was written. Exactly which episodes were part of the original *Oldest Morkinskinna and which were added later in the thirteenth century has been the subject of debate (Andersson and Gade 2000, 21–57; *Msk* vii–xxiv; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 154–73; Gade 1998; Ármann Jakobsson 1997, 32–3), but since the “þættir” and skaldic stanzas are all the products of native Icelandic oral and written literary traditions, their presence in the text has little bearing on the present investigation.

Fagrskinna

The second of the three great compendia, *Fagrskinna*, begins with the reign of Halfdan svarti in the middle of the ninth century and ends with the death of King Magnús Erlingsson in 1177. *Fagrskinna* is unique among the three great compendia in that it is believed to be an originally Norwegian and not an Icelandic text, and it was most likely composed for the Norwegian king Hákon Hákonarson around the year 1225 (*Fsk* cxxiii–cxxv; Indrebø 1917,

275–78; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 175–76). Despite its Norwegian origin, the author of *Fagrskinna* clearly had access to and made use of the Icelandic *Morkinskinna* text (*Hkr* III, v, n.1). *Fagrskinna* was in turn almost certainly used by the Icelander Snorri Sturluson in his *Heimskringla* (*Fsk* cxxv; Indrebø 1917, 285–97; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 174–77, 197–98, 222–28, 235–36). A second characteristic which distinguishes *Fagrskinna* from the other two compendia is that *Fagrskinna* appears to have been based strictly on written literary sources. The anonymous author made use of written texts such as *Morkinskinna*, *Agrip*, Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and others, but in contrast to *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* the *Fagrskinna* author seems to have made little use of oral historical traditions (Andersson 1985, 217; Indrebø 1917, 268–69; *Fsk* cxxiii; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 188).

The textual tradition of *Fagrskinna* is represented by two groups of extant manuscripts, group "A" and group "B." The original parchment manuscript which was the parent of the "A" group was brought to Copenhagen to be part of Árni Magnússon's collection, and it remained there until it was destroyed in the university library fire of 1728. However, several copies of it (AM 301 4to, AM 303 4to, and AM 52 fol.) were made by Ásgeir Jónsson (1657–1707), a scribe who worked in the service of Þormóður Torfason (1636–1719), the later biographer of the king of Norway and Denmark (*Fsk* lxi). In a letter to Þormóður Torfason, Árni Magnússon referred to this manuscript as "*Fagrskinna*" ("[the] fair parchment") which has remained the common designation for this work (*Fsk* lxiv). Based on the evidence of the extant copies, the "A" parent manuscript appears to have been written in the first half of the fourteenth century in southeast Norway (*Fsk* lxii).

The original parchment parent manuscript of the "B" group was also destroyed in the Copenhagen fire of 1728, but a single leaf of the original had been removed before the rest of the manuscript was sent there. This fragment, NRA 51, is still extant. Prior to the fire, Ásgeir Jónsson made copies of this parent manuscript as well, and three copies of the "B" text (UB 371 fol., AM 51 fol., and AM 302 4to) are still extant. The text of the original "B" manuscript apparently ended slightly earlier than did that of the "A" manuscript, because the copies of the "B" group all conclude with the reigns of the sons of the sons of Haraldr gilli (1136–1161). The original "B" manuscript was older than the "A" manuscript. It is dated to the middle of the thirteenth century, and was most likely written in the area around Trondheim. The "B" manuscript was thus written at a time very close to the composition of the original work. A manuscript from this group, UB 371 fol., was judged to be best by Bjarni Einarsson, the editor of the latest fornrit edition, and his edition of

Fagrskinna is based on this manuscript, though he occasionally departs from it to include some of the fuller descriptive passages from manuscripts of the "A" group (*Fsk* lxii–lxiii).

Heimskringla

Heimskringla, which is commonly attributed to the Icelander Snorri Sturluson (1178/79–1241) is by far the most famous compendium of kings' sagas. The sagas contained in *Heimskringla* span approximately the same historical period as those in *Fagrskinna*, although *Heimskringla* differs in that it begins with "Ynglingasaga," a saga of legendary material which traces the mythic origins of the Norwegian ruling dynasty down to the ninth century. *Heimskringla* is generally considered to have been composed around the year 1230 (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 156, see below). Both the name of the compendium, *Heimskringla*, and Snorri's authorship have become so widely accepted that it might be useful here to recount the evidence for establishing both the name of the work and Snorri's alleged authorship of it.

The Icelander Þormóður Torfason came into possession of a manuscript of kings' sagas in approximately the year 1681, and he consistently called the manuscript "Kringla" in his written references to it. The name is apparently taken from the first words of the first saga which begins with the words "Kringla heimsins" ("Orb of the world"). In 1697 Johann Peringskiöld published an edition of one of the copies of *Kringla (Holm papp 18 fol.) which began with the words "Kringla heims" and the name has been used to designate the text ever since (*Hkr* I, v). In 1718 Þormóður Torfason sent *Kringla to Copenhagen where it was destroyed in the fire at the university library in 1728 (*Hkr* III, lxxxiv).

*Kringla, however, was copied several times while still in Þormóður's possession, and these copies are still extant. One copy (Holm papp 18 fol.) was made by Jón Eggertsson during the years 1681–82, and Ásgeir Jónsson also made several copies of it (AM 35 fol., AM 36 fol., AM 63 fol., AM 70 fol., Oslo UB 521 fol.). These are generally considered to be the most faithful copies of *Kringla, and Ásgeir's copies were the bases for the editions by C. R. Unger in 1864–68, and Finnur Jónsson in 1893–1901 (*Hkr* III, lxxxv). All the extant copies are thus derived from one now lost parent manuscript, *Kringla, of which only one leaf (Lbs frg 82, formerly Perg. fol. nr. 9, I) still survives in the royal library in Stockholm. Though the manuscript was found in Norway, the extant leaf is written in an Icelandic hand and is dated to between 1250 and 1280 (Louis-Jensen 1977, 16).

There existed redactions of the compendium in Iceland as well. AM 39 fol. is an Icelandic manuscript which has been dated to circa 1300, and which

consists of 43 partly non-contiguous leaves from a redaction of *Heimskringla*. It has been suggested that these are the remnants of a once complete Icelandic manuscript which was at one time possessed by (later bishop) Jón Vigfússon and Þorsteinn Þórðarson and which was supposed to have been sent to Jón Eggertsson in Sweden in 1682 but never arrived (*Hkr* III, lxxxvi-lxxxvii; Louis-Jensen 1977, 18). The extant leaves are all from the first and third part of *Heimskringla*, and Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson therefore believed the text to be closely related to *Fríssbók*, which does not contain the middle third of *Heimskringla*, the saga of St. Óláfr. He believed this saga was most likely lacking in AM 39 fol. as well (*Hkr* III, lxxxvii n.3, xciv). Jonna Louis-Jensen disagrees with that view and points to the findings gained in a recent disassembly of the manuscript as part of its restoration. She concludes that AM 39 fol. once contained "Óláfs saga" as well. *Kringla and AM 39 fol. are thus the only two manuscripts known to have included all three parts of *Heimskringla* (Louis-Jensen 1977, 16–19).

Several extant fourteenth-century Icelandic manuscripts such as *Fríssbók* (AM 45 fol.), and *Eirspennill* (AM 47 fol.) contain redactions of large sections of *Heimskringla* as do fragments and copies of no longer extant manuscripts such as *Jöfraskinna* (Holm perg 9 II fol., AM 37 fol., and AM 38 fol.), and *Gullinskinna* (AM 42 fol.). These texts demonstrate that they, *Kringla, and AM 39 fol. were all part of a textual tradition in Iceland that continued to redact *Heimskringla* through the fourteenth century. The textual relationships between these *Heimskringla* manuscripts are discussed by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (*Hkr* III, lxxxiii-xcv) and Jonna Louis-Jensen (Louis-Jensen 1977, 16–43).

Snorri Sturluson's name does not appear in any of the extant *Heimskringla* versions (Jakob Benediktsson 1955, 118; Louis-Jensen 1977, 49; *Hkr* I, vi). His authorship of the work has been determined by the known facts of his life and by several other pieces of evidence. A century before *Kringla came into the possession of Þormóður Torfason, a Norwegian named Laurents Hanssön seems to have had access to the same manuscript. Between the years 1548 and 1551 Hanssön translated the manuscript into Danish. He began his translation with the words, "Fortalen Snorris Sturllis historiographi Noru" and closed with the words "Her Enndis fortalenn Snorris Sturlesenn vdi konninge Boghen." Hanssön's translation was based on at least part of the now lost *Kringla manuscript, and it is surmised that Hanssön knew Snorri's name by its having appeared on the first leaf of the manuscript (*Hkr* I, vi-vii; Jakob Benediktsson 1955, 118).

There was another early translation of *Heimskringla* into Danish made by the Norwegian priest Peder Claussön in Jæren sometime around the year 1599 and published in 1633 by Ole Worm (Louis-Jensen 1977, 43–4).

Claussön did not know Hanssön's translation (Louis-Jensen 1977, 49), but he, too, attributed the authorship of the Old Norse text to Snorri Sturluson. Claussön's attribution was apparently based on his knowledge of popular sixteenth-century Icelandic traditions concerning their native historians (*Hkr* I, vii n.2). Claussön's independent identification of Snorri as the author of *Heimskringla* agrees with that of Hanssön, and also with what is said about Snorri in Old Icelandic texts. *Oddaverja annal*, *Orkneyinga saga*, and the *Largest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason*, all refer to Snorri as a writer of sagas (*Hkr* I, ix), and there is an interesting reference to Snorri in *Sturlunga saga*, which was written by Snorri's nephew Sturla Þórðarson. According to that saga, Snorri's other nephew, Sturla Sighvatsson, stayed with Snorri in 1230 and was occupied with copying saga books from those that Snorri had compiled ("ok lagði mikinn hug á, at láta rita sögubækir eptir bókum þeim, er Snorri setti saman" [*Sturl* I, 299]).

There is room for debate as to whether the sagas Sturla was referring to were in fact those which comprise *Heimskringla*. Snorri is known to have written a saga of St. Óláfr Haraldsson, the *Prose Edda*, and perhaps also *Egils saga* (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 326–27) and it might be that one or more of these are the sagas Sturla was referring to (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 176–77). However, the sum of all the evidence cited thus far points fairly persuasively toward Snorri being the author of *Heimskringla*, and his authorship is generally accepted today (*Hkr* I, vii-ix; Andersson 1985, 219), although not universally. Jonna Louis-Jensen recently made a case which disputes Snorri's authorship of at least parts of what we now know as *Heimskringla* (Louis-Jensen 1977, 43–61), but her conclusions were in turn rejected by Ólafur Halldórsson on the basis of textual correspondences and references to Snorri found in the *Largest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason* (Ólafur Halldórsson 1979, 123–27).

Additional known details of Snorri's life also make it likely that he was the author of *Heimskringla*. Snorri was fostered as a child by Jón Loptsson, a grandson of the Norwegian king Magnús berfœttr on his mother's side, and a grandson of one of the first Icelandic historians, Sæmundr Sigfússon, on his father's side. Snorri thus had access to the best education in medieval Iceland, and he quite possibly had access to the best library in Iceland as well (see above). Snorri became a very powerful man later in life, serving as lawspeaker during the years 1215–18, and again from 1222 to 1231. He made two trips to Norway; the first in 1218–20 and the second in 1237–39. Snorri became involved in the power struggles at the Norwegian court during his second visit when he supported Duke Skúli Bárðarson, the regent and father-in-law of the young Norwegian king Hákon Hákonarson against the king, either in the hope of maintaining Icelandic independence against the designs of the

Norwegian monarchy, or with the hopes of being named the king's representative in Iceland. Snorri was ultimately forbidden to leave Norway by Hákon, but he disobeyed the king's command. King Hákon won the power struggle in Norway in 1240 when he had Duke Skúli killed, and Snorri paid the full price for his disobedience when he, too, was killed at King Hákon's instigation at his farmstead in Iceland on September 23, 1241 (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 325–27). A compendium of sagas of the Norwegian kings such as *Heimskringla* would have been a perfect gift from an Icelander who was trying to ingratiate himself with members of the Norwegian court, and this fact is a final piece of evidence which points to Snorri being the author of *Heimskringla*, as well to the date of its composition (1225–35).

Snorri drew on a wide range of written and oral sources for *Heimskringla*. He made much use of *Morkinskinna* for the period 1030–1155 (Andersson 1985, 217), and he most likely used a version of *Fagrskinna* as well (*Fagr* cxxv; Indrebø 1917, 285–97; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 174–77, 197–98, 222–28, 235–36). Although *Fagrskinna* is a Norwegian text, Gustav Indrebø made a case based on textual correspondences that a version of the text was used by Snorri in Iceland. Indrebø concluded that Snorri most likely came into possession of a version of *Fagrskinna*, but not until after he had started *Heimskringla*, and he only began to make use of it somewhere in his account of Haraldr gráfeldr (Indrebø 1917, 289, 296–97; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 174–75). This view is still generally accepted, although, as Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson has pointed out, the version of *Fagrskinna* that would have been used by Snorri was a much earlier redaction than those in the extant manuscripts, and it is impossible to be perfectly certain about supposed textual borrowings (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 235). As the following study will show, Snorri also used foreign sources in addition to the written and oral native sources which were known to him.

What is most important for the present study is that the sagas contained in the three great compendia were first written down in Iceland as part of *Morkinskinna* around the year 1220. They were reworked by the author of *Fagrskinna* ca.1225 and then again by Snorri Sturluson between the years 1225–35, who had access to *Morkinskinna* and most likely to *Fagrskinna*. These compendia therefore all originated at a point in time much later than the period of the first synoptic historians (see Chapter 2) and decades after the first separate kings' sagas were written in Iceland (see Chapters 3 and 4). The many different foreign sources used by the later compilers of kings' sagas make it clear that the authors of *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* were working in a very different kind of intellectual environment than their predecessors.

Chapter Two

Ari and the Synoptic Historians' Use of Foreign Sources

Ari made much use of non-native sources in his *Íslendingabók*. This fact, coupled with the great esteem in which Ari's writings were held by later writers of kings' sagas, makes his work and the sources he consulted relevant to this investigation. Similarly, the synoptic histories were in all likelihood composed just prior to the first period of kings' saga writing in Iceland, and their authors also made use of non-native historical sources. When these works became known to the later writers of kings' sagas, they set a precedent for how these writers might go about their task. Ari and the later synoptic historians did not hesitate to make use of foreign sources for the purposes of establishing accuracy in an account or for simply embellishing a narrative in order to tell a more entertaining story. It will be helpful to identify the foreign sources used by these early authors in order to ascertain exactly which sources were available at the time and place they wrote, and also to investigate how the authors made use of the sources to which they had access.

FOREIGN SOURCES IN ARI'S ÍSLENDINGABÓK

Foreign influence on Ari's second redaction of *Íslendingabók* is most apparent in Ari's system of chronology and dating. There were three events in European history which Ari could date with certainty according to the Christian calendar, and he used these dates to place the events in *Íslendingabók* in accordance with European history. The three events were the death of Gregory the Great in 604, the death of St. Edmund in the year 870, and the fall of King Óláfr Tryggvason in the year 1000 (Ólafia Einarsdóttir 1964, 43; Ellehøj 1965, 75–80). At the end of his *Íslendingabók*, Ari calculates the year of the "aldamót." This is the Icelandic term for the nineteen-year lunar orbital cycle,

which was commonly used by medieval clerics for the purpose of establishing the future dates of Easter and for predicting eclipses. Ari writes (*Ísl* 25–26):

Þat vas tuttugu vetrum ens annars hundraðs eptir fall Óláfs Tryggvasonar, en fimm tegum ens þriðja hundraðs eptir dráp Eadmundar Englakonungs, en sextán vetrum ens sétta hundraðs eptir andlát Gregóríus páfa, þess es kristni kom á England, at því es talit es. En hann andaðisk á qðru ári konungdóms Fóku keisara, fjórum vetrum ens sjaunda hundraðs eptir burð Krists at almannatali. Þat verðr allt saman tuttugu ár ens tolftha hundraðs.

(This was twenty years of the second hundred after the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason, and five decades of the third hundred after the slaying of Edmund, the king of England, and sixteen winters of the sixth hundred after the death of Pope Gregory, who brought Christianity to England, as it is reckoned. And he died in the second year of the reign of Emperor Phocas, four years of the seventh hundred after the birth of Christ according to the reckoning of all men. That all adds up to twenty years of the twelfth hundred.)

Thus by referring to the three dates in the Christian calendar which he knew with absolute certainty, Ari establishes the year of the completion of the last lunar cycle as 1120 according to the Christian calendar (Ólafía Einarssdóttir 1964, 43–50). These dates comprised a system of absolute dating from which Ari added or subtracted in order to determine the exact year of specific events in Scandinavian history. Since Ari's system of dating was adopted and retained by later writers of kings' sagas, it is worth investigating his sources in more detail. A close look at *Íslendingabók* will show which European sources enabled Ari to establish this date with certainty.

Passio Sancti Eadmundi or *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*

At the beginning of *Íslendingabók*, Ari mentions the year in which Ívarr, the son of Ragnarr loðbrók, killed King Edmund: "And that was seventy years into the ninth hundred after the birth of Christ, as is written in his saga" ("en þat vas sjau tegum <vetra> ens níunda hundraðs eptir burð Krists, at því es ritit í sögu hans" [*Ísl* 4]). Traditionally, the particular "saga" of Edmund's life to which Ari refers was thought to be the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* composed ca. 985 by Abbo of Fleury (*Ísl* xxii–xxiii). However, both Einar Ól. Sveinsson (1948, 40, n.2) and Hermann Pálsson (1957, 143–4) noted that none of the extant manuscripts of that work contain the date of Edmund's death. Einar

Ól. suspected that a no longer extant text of Abbo's *Passio* had been available to Ari, and that that version had contained the exact date of Edmund's death. More recently, Svend Ellehøj has argued that Ari's source was not the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* of Abbo, but rather a work by the Anglo-Saxon archdeacon Hermannus entitled *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*, composed shortly before 1100. This work does contain the exact date of Edmund's death, borrowing the date from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* ("instabat enim, ut cronica testatur Anglica, annus incarnati Domini octingentesimus septuagesimus, formati vero mundi, his exceptis, decursis quinque milibus" [*MEA* I, 27]). Though Hermann objected that this work would not have been identified as a "saga" by Ari, Ellehøj disagrees and sees no reason why this could not be the same work known to and used by Ari as his source (Ellehøj 1965, 64–5). The question of why Ari would have been especially interested in the death of this particular king and later saint can be explained by the fact that, in Icelandic tradition, Edmund was killed by the sons of Ragnarr loðbrók. There were many Icelanders who considered themselves to be descended from Ragnarr, including Ari himself (*Ísl* 28; Ólafía Einarssdóttir 1964, 65, 70). Thus the death of Edmund was important for dating Scandinavian events, as it allowed Ari to date the life of Ragnarr.

Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*

Ari mentions the date of the death of Gregory the Great in conjunction with the second year of the reign of Emperor Phocas. This enables us to identify another foreign literary source which was known to Ari; namely, the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* by Bede. According to Bede, the battle of Degsastan between Aedan, King of the Scots, and Ethelfrid of Northumbria was fought in 603, in the first year of Phocas' reign ("Quod uidelicet bellum Aedilfrid anno ab incarnatione Domini DCIII, regni autem sui, quod XX et IIII annis tenuit, anno XI, perfecit; porro anno Focatis, qui tum Romani regni apicem tenebat, primo" [*HE* 71]). In the next book of his history Bede states that Phocas died in the second year of his reign ("Rexit autem ecclesiam temporibus imperatorum Mauricii et Focatis. Secundo autem eiusdem Focatis anno transiens ex hac vita, migravit ad ueram, quae in caelis est, uitam" [*HE* 79]). Thus when Ari connects the year of Gregory's death (604) with the second year of Emperor Phocas' reign ("En hann andaðisk á qðru ári konungdóms Fóku keisara" [*Ísl* 26]), he demonstrates his familiarity with Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and also his use of this history as a source for establishing his own chronology (Ellehøj 1965, 76–77).

Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*

In Chapter VII of *Íslendingabók* Ari names the year of the fall of King Óláfr Tryggvason (1000), both in relation to the death of St. Edmund, and also in relation to the birth of Christ ("Þat vas þremr tegum vetra ens annars hundraðs eptir dráp Eadmundar, en þúsundi eptir burð Krists at alþýðu tali" [*Ísl* 18]). Since the last two of the three years of which Ari is certain, 1000, 870, and 604 can be traced to non-native European literary sources, it is worth investigating whether the first year, 1000, the date of the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason, is ultimately derived from a non-native written source as well. The only other written source which names the year of Óláfr Tryggvason's fall, and which could have been available to Ari before 1120, is Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* (Ellehøj 1965, 78).

Adam wrote his history approximately between the years 1072 and 1085, and his work was widely disseminated in the North after his death (*Lex. d. MAs* 1, 107). In Book II, chapter 40, Adam gives the year 1000 as the date of Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle ("Interea millesimus ab incarnatione Domini annus feliciter impletus est, et hic est annus archiepiscopi 12" [*AB* 69]). But there is more than mere circumstantial evidence to indicate that Ari knew Adam's work and used it to establish his chronology: in the ninth chapter of his *Íslendingabók* he reproduces an erroneous date found in Adam's work. Adam mistakenly wrote that Pope Leo IX and the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III both died in 1056 ("Interea condicionibus utrimque protractis, sanctissimus papa Leo migravit. Eodemque anno fortissimus imperator Heinricus decessit" [*AB* 118]). In fact, Pope Leo died on April 19, 1054 (*Lex. d. MAs* 5, 1880), but Ari repeats Adam's error when he reports the length of Bishop Ísleifr Gizurarson's episcopate. He correctly writes that Bishop Ísleifr died in 1080, "eighty years after the fall of Óláfr Tryggvason" ("átta tegum vetra eptir Óláfs fall Tryggvasonar" [*Ísl* 21]). But earlier in the same chapter he states that Ísleifr had been bishop 24 years ("hann hafði alls verit byskup fjóra vetr ok tuttugu"), and that Leo had been pope when Ísleifr was consecrated bishop ("þá vas Leó septimus páfi" [*Ísl* 21]). Ari thus traces the date of Ísleifr's consecration back 24 years to the year 1056, two years after the actual death of Pope Leo. The possibility that Ari knew Adam's history, and that he drew upon Adam's dates for the purpose of establishing his own chronology, would explain this inaccuracy in Ari's work nicely (Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 22; Ellehøj 1965, 66–7).

Ari himself states that he had access to some version of the life of St. Edmund (*Ísl* 4). This was most likely either Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* or Hermannus' *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*. Ari also used Bede's

Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum, and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. Versions of all of these works must have been brought to Iceland before the composition of *Íslendingabók* ca. 1122–32, but it is difficult to specify more exactly when or where they were acquired. Bede's writings were extremely widely disseminated throughout the Middle Ages, and the presence of his history in Iceland at an early date is not surprising. However, the presence of a copy of Adam of Bremen's history in Iceland at such an early date is more intriguing. Perhaps it is significant that Adam included a laudatory description of Iceland's first bishop, Ísleifr Gizurarson in his work (*AB* 185). This fact might have made redactions of Adam's history more appealing than other historical works to the Icelanders who later traveled to the Continent. At any rate, a copy of Adam's history must have been acquired and brought to Iceland some time between the years 1075 and 1120. It is also interesting that a life of St. Edmund was known to Ari. One possible reason for Icelanders' interest in this particular saint has been given above, but it is a curious fact that Scandinavians continued to be associated with St. Edmund and the abbey which bears his name throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries. William of Malmesbury and John of Worcester, in two accounts which are probably derived from the *Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey*, report that the Danish king, Sveinn Forkbeard, was killed while attempting to despoil the shrine of St. Edmund at Bury in 1014 (*WM* 308–10; *JW* 476; *MEA* I, 32–39; Wright 1939, 174). Archbishop Eysteinn of Niðaróss stayed there for a time while exiled in 1180, and, ironically, this visit by Eysteinn and his retinue apparently influenced English writers of history. After Eysteinn's visit William of Newburgh, Benedict of Peterborough, and Roger of Hoveden all wrote fairly accurate descriptions of the events surrounding the civil war in Norway between the two kings Sverrir and Magnús Erlingsson (Storm 1901, 169–191; Steinnes 1946–48, 40–44).

THEODORICUS' *HISTORIA DE ANTIQUITATE REGUM*

Theodoricus begins his history by referring to many medieval authors and historians by name, among them Boethius, Hugh of St. Victor, and Sigebert of Gembloux (*MHN* 3–4). He also mentions several classical authors, including Lucan, Statius, Horace, Plato, Ovid, and Pliny the Elder (Frank 1909, 82–3; A. O. Johnsen 1939, 30). One might therefore expect his history to contain a wealth of literary borrowings from foreign sources, but this is not the case. Although Theodoricus quotes and paraphrases many authors, his many mistakes and misquotations show that he generally was citing from memory and did not have many written sources in front of him. Theodoricus

once refers to having read in the *Historia Normannorum* (probably the work of William of Jumièges: Storm *MHN* 22 n.3; Lange 1989, 48) that Óláfr Haraldsson had been baptized in Normandy by archbishop Robert, but other than this one instance of consulting a foreign source for information pertaining to Norwegian history, the majority of Theodoricus' literary references are more accurately described as frequently memorized literary commonplaces, which often made up educated medieval clerics' rhetorical repertoires, than as true literary borrowings (Hanssen 1945, 169–73; 1949a, 88; Bernheim quoted in Skard 1930, 75–6). Theodoricus himself repeatedly complains about the difficulty of writing history in a country with no books (“Sed quia valde difficile est in hujusce ad liquidum veritatem comprehendere, maxime ubi nulla opitulatur scriptorum auctoritas” [*MHN* 6], 22). The only written sources that are known to have been at Theodoricus' disposal are the no longer extant *Catalogus regum Norwagiensium* to which he himself refers (*MHN* 44), and whose identification has been the subject of much scholarly debate (Ellehøj 1965, 182–196), and the *Passio Olavi* from which he drew information regarding the sanctity of King Óláfr Haraldsson. Textual correspondences leave no doubt that the *Passio* and Theodoricus' history are related, but even here some doubt has been raised as to whether the *Passio* used Theodoricus' *Historia* as a source or vice versa (Ellehøj 1965, 181–2; Lange 1989, 52–3). Since both the *Passio* and *Catalogus regum* were almost certainly the products of native tradition, they will not be discussed here. There are, however, several passages in Theodoricus' history which rise above the level of medieval academic rhetorical commonplaces and constitute potential literary borrowings from foreign sources. Verbal correspondences are close enough to force the conclusion that Theodoricus incorporated passages from Sallust's *Bellum Catalinae*, and two of his digressions demonstrate that he was familiar with Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, and Augustine's *De civitate Dei*.

Sallust's *Bellum Catalinae*

Although Theodoricus does not refer to Sallust or his history by name, close textual correspondences leave little doubt that he drew upon Sallust's description of Cataline's death in his narration of Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle (Skard 1935, 120; Hanssen 1945, 171–2; Lange 1989, 62–3). Theodoricus writes (*MHN* 24; emphasis added):

Tandem cum sibi invicem succedendo et semper **integros pro sauciis** restituendo non tam victus est **exercitus regis nostri** quam consumptus. Nec adversarii **tamen incruentam victoriam** reportaverunt, **nam**

strenuissimus quisque aut in bello ceciderat **aut graviter vulneratus discesserat**.

(Finally, although alternately substituting his men and always supplying fresh troops for the wounded, the army of our king was not so much defeated, as [it was] depleted. Nevertheless the enemy did not accomplish a bloodless victory, for the most valiant men had either fallen in battle or left badly wounded.)

Compare Theodoricus' description with that of Sallust (*Sall* 124–128; emphasis added):

integros pro sauciis arcessere . . . **Neque tamen exercitus populi Romani** laetam aut **incruentam victoriam** adeptus erat. **Nam strenuissimus quisque aut** occiderat in proelio **aut graviter vulneratus discesserat**.

(Summoning fresh troops for the wounded . . . Nevertheless, the army of the Roman people did not gain a joyful or a bloodless victory. For the most valiant men had either fallen in battle or left badly wounded.)

It is curious that an author who so proudly names the other authors he has read does not attribute this passage to any source. Perhaps Theodoricus did not know the source of the citation. The close verbal similarity, however, not only points to a literary borrowing from Sallust, but suggests that, at least in this case, Theodoricus had access to some kind of written source besides the *Passio* and the *Catalogus regum*. Scholars have speculated that the future historian might have taken notes from other histories while studying on the Continent (Hanssen 1949a, 85; Storm *MHN* x). It is also possible that the passage based on Sallust is the result of the medieval tradition of chrestomathy, in which selections of passages were compiled to aid in learning Latin, and which likely played a part in Theodoricus' education.

Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*

When describing the death of Haraldr harðráði (*MHN* 57, 59), Theodoricus mentions that Haraldr's demise had been presaged by an unfavorable omen: just prior to the Battle of Stamford Bridge, the horse upon which Haraldr was riding had fallen, and this portended the king's own death (“eundem Haraldum de equo corruisse et in illo casu mortem ejus præfiguratum fuisse” [*MHN* 59]). This apparently prompted Theodoricus to expand upon omens known to him which had portended the deaths of other kings, and he begins

to enumerate those which had preceded the death of Charlemagne. Theodoricus writes that before Charlemagne died, the bridge across the Rhine at Mainz burned; the portico which ran between the cathedral and palace at Aachen collapsed; a written dedication to Charlemagne in the cathedral faded in the last year of his life so that one could no longer read his name; and finally, shortly before his death, Charlemagne too, had been thrown violently from his horse, but was unharmed (*MHN* 59–60).

Theodoricus' account of these events makes it very clear that he knew at least part of Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni* well. Arne Odd Johnsen argued that Theodoricus derived his information about Charlemagne from the *Chronica* of Sigebert of Gembloux, because Theodoricus mentions Sigebert in his text, and there is a close correspondence in the vocabulary used by Theodoricus and Sigebert to describe the burning of the bridge across the Rhine (Johnsen 1939, 50). However, Sigebert must be rejected as the source of this passage, since his work only mentions this one event, and all of the various portents described by Theodoricus are found in chapter 32 of Einhard's biography of the emperor (*VK* 104–06). Furthermore, in addition to describing the omens, both Theodoricus and Einhard include the detail that Charlemagne stoically refused to pay attention to these signs. It is most likely that both Sigebert and Theodoricus derived their accounts from Einhard. The textual correspondences between Theodoricus and Einhard are close, but there are differences in wording (though there are similarities as well), and the order in which the various portents are named varies, as do several minor factual details (see Note 1). Theodoricus seems to be quoting Einhard either from memory or from a set of notes taken from a version of Einhard's *Vita*. Considered in conjunction with the citation from Sallust listed above, it is tempting to surmise that while Theodoricus did not have many books at his disposal, he did have written notes in some form. These were most likely either taken from histories he had read while studying abroad, or they were part of a chrestomathic text to which he had access (Storm *MHN* x; A. O. Johnsen 1939, 41, 43, 51).

William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*
and Augustine's *De civitate Dei*

There were at least two other foreign sources which were known to Theodoricus. William of Malmesbury reports a twelfth-century sensation in his *Gesta regum Anglorum*. According to William, the body of Pallas, the son of Evander and a prominent figure in Virgil's *Aeneid*, was discovered uncorrupted in Rome. Parts of William's Latin account of the incident are repeated almost verbatim in Theodoricus' *Historia* (Paasche 1934, 125–6; Storm *MHN* 37–9 n.23). William's account reads as follows (*WM* 384–5):

Tunc corpus Pallantis, filii Evandri, de quo Virgilius narrat, Romæ reperi-
tum est illibatum, ingenti stupore omnium quod tot secula incorrup-
tione sui superavit; quod ea sit natura conditorum corporum, ut carne
tabescente cutis exterior nervos, nervi ossa contineant. Hiatus uulneris
quod in medio pectore Turnus fecerat quattuor pedibus et semis mensu-
ratum est. Epitaphium huiusmodi repertum:

Filius Evandri Pallas, quem lancea Turni militis occidit more
suo, iacet hic.

(It was at that time that the body of Pallas son of Evander, of whom Virgil
tells, was discovered intact in Rome. The way it had lasted for so many
centuries incorrupt caused universal astonishment; for the nature of em-
balmed corpses is such that, while the flesh decays, the outer skin holds
together the sinews, and the sinews hold together the bones. The great
gaping wound made in his breast by Turnus measured four feet six inches
by the rule. An epitaph was also found, that ran somewhat as follows:

Pallas, the son of Evander, whom the lance of the warrior
Turnus killed, lies here, according to his own custom.)

The account found in Theodoricus' *Historia* reads (*MHN* 37–9):

Ante hos quoque fere septuaginta annos repertus est Romæ Pallas filius
Evandri, quem Turnus occidit, cuius mortem beatus dicit Augustinus
simulachrum Apollinis flevisse mira dæmonis versutia, quasi doluisset
occasum viri probissimi. Inventum est etiam vas argenteum, locatum
super pectus ejus, in quo confectio myrrhæ erat et balsami pretiosissima,
indeque egrediebantur duo calami aurei, quorum summitates naribus in-
figebantur, ut videlicet virtute unguenti corpus non minus interius quam
exterius duraret incorruptum. Inventi sunt autem et duo versus insculpti:

Filius Evandri Pallas, quem lancea Turni Militis occidit,
more suo jacet hic.

Qui postea erectus, patente ingenti vulnere sub pectore, pæne murum
civitatis adæquavit statura sua ibique stetit, donec balsamo pluviis abluto
in semetipsum collapsus est et sic iterum terræ ossa mandantur.

(Also nearly seventy years before, Pallas, the son of Evander, whom
Turnus had killed, was found in Rome. [Of] his death, St. Augustine says
that a statue of Apollo had wept, due to the cunning deception of a
demon, as if he had grieved at the death of the most excellent man. There

was also found a silver vessel, placed upon his chest, in which there was a confection of myrrh and the most precious balsam. And there came out of [the vessel] two reeds of gold, the tips of which were fastened to the nostrils, so that, clearly due to the effect of the oil, the body survived no less corrupted internally than it was externally. There were even found two verses carved [into the sarcophagus]:

Pallas, the son of Evander, whom the lance of the warrior
Turnus killed, lies here, according to his own custom.

Later, when he had been raised up, there was [seen] a huge open wound below the chest, and his own height was almost level with the wall of the city. [The corpse] stood there until the balsam was washed off by the rains, and he collapsed into himself, and thus [his] bones were again put into the earth.)

That William's *Gesta regum* was known to and used by a late twelfth-century Norwegian author is not surprising. William's work was immensely popular in the British Isles, and seems to have enjoyed an extremely wide dissemination almost immediately after its composition sometime prior to 1143 (Stubbs 1887, xxvii). Many other twelfth-century writers of British history knew and referred to William's history including Geoffrey of Monmouth, Gervase of Canterbury, and Symeon of Durham (Stubbs 1887, xci-xcii). An educated Scandinavian traveler to the British Isles could have easily come across a copy of William's work, then bought or copied it, and taken it back with him. Such a scenario is supported by the fact that the description of the discovery of Pallas' body is also found in the Icelandic *Annals of Flatey*, although it was mistakenly entered under the year 1053 (*Flat* III, 508). William's history was certainly disseminated widely enough for the Norwegian Theodoricus to have excerpted or acquired parts of it either in Norway or while he was studying in France.

Of further interest is the fact that Theodoricus combined the account of William of Malmesbury with a reference to a passage found in Book III, chapter 11 of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (*City of God* I, 298–301). The writings of the church fathers were known fairly early in Scandinavia. Ari's use of Bede is discussed above, and two passages from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* are discussed below in connection with the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason (see Chapter 3). Theodoricus' reference to *De civitate Dei* suggests that at least parts of some of the writings of Augustine were circulating in Scandinavia by the middle of the twelfth century as well (Olmer 1902, 7, 13, 15, 17, 52).

Though Theodoricus begins his work by naming several famous writers of his day, and he names the titles of many works of classical literature throughout his work, the content of his *Historia* appears to have been little influenced by foreign sources. He knew and had read many literary works, probably while studying abroad, but they are not incorporated into his text except at a very superficial level. Only when he refers to the *Historia Normannorum* for his information about Óláfr Haraldsson does Theodoricus acknowledge using a foreign source for information about Norwegian history. He obviously knew at least parts of Sallust's *Bellum Catalinae*, but Sallust's text is utilized only to help him dramatize his account of Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle. He was familiar with Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, and Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, but he draws upon these works only while making two of his many digressions. Theodoricus' use of classical and medieval sources adds little substance to his history. Nevertheless, the very close correspondences between the relevant passages in Theodoricus' text and the passages in Sallust, Einhard, William of Malmesbury, and Augustine suggest that either Theodoricus had taken notes while he was abroad, or that he had some chrestomathic text at his disposal. It is curious that both passages from Sallust and Einhard are from the very end of their works, and it is also striking that Theodoricus, who is generally happy to name the sources known to him, does not identify any of these authors except Augustine. Apparently the notes or the text used by Theodoricus did not go so far as to identify the authors of the excerpted works. At any rate, there is sufficient evidence to cause some doubt concerning the truth of Theodoricus' statements that he made use of virtually no written sources (*MHN* 4, 6).

HISTORIA NORWEGIÆ

Like Ari and Theodoricus, the anonymous author of *HN* made use of foreign literary sources in his work. When describing volcanic activity in Iceland, for example, the *HN* author relied on other authors, and he specifically mentions *De mirabilibus mundi* by Solinus (*MHN* 95). This reference by the *HN* author is incorrect, however, because verbal and grammatical correspondences leave no doubt that the work he was actually citing was a written version of *Imago mundi* by Honorius Augustodunensis (Skard 1930, 78; Ellehøj 1965, 146; Steinnes 1946–48, 17–30; see Note 2). Asgaut Steinnes also points out that the first nineteen lines after the end of the prologue (*MHN* 73–75) contain much of the same vocabulary as chapters 6–8 of book I of Honorius' work (*HA* 51–52). Steinnes argues persuasively that the *HN* author used a

single manuscript, namely, the no longer extant Sorø MS, which was destroyed in the fire in Copenhagen in 1728. That manuscript contained three of the sources known to the *HN* author: Adam of Bremen, Solinus, and Honorius (Steinnes 1946–48, 17–30). If the *HN* author did use a version of this particular manuscript, his confusion of Solinus and Honorius would be understandable.

There is a passage in the *HN* which suggests that the author might have also been acquainted with Gerald of Wales's *Topographica Hibernica*, composed ca. 1188 (*GWV*, xi). Both Gerald (*GWV*, 58–59) and the author of *HN* (*MHN* 83–85) give a fantastic account of the living habits of beavers, which they report sometimes use one of their own number as a slave and a carriage when hauling wood from the forest to their abodes ("Simili naturæ artificio castores utuntur; qui, dum castra sibi in fluviis construunt, sui generis servis quasi pro rheda utentes, a silvis ad aquas lignea robora miro vecturæ modo contrahunt et conducunt" [*GWV*, 58]). A very similar account of the beaver is given in the Danish *Chronicon Lethrense* composed ca. 1170. The exact textual relationship of these three texts is unclear, but some connection among them is certain (Ellehøj 1965, 147). Besides Honorius and possibly Gerald of Wales, the most detectable literary influences on the *HN* are Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini*, and the *Liber de legibus Angliæ* (Ellehøj 1965, 146–161; Storm *MHN* 122–3 n.19). Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* was clearly used as a source by the *HN* author as well, but since the passages derived from Adam occur in relation to the life of Óláfr Tryggvason, they will be discussed below in the chapter dealing with his saga (see Chapter 3).

The Anglo-Norman sources: *Liber de legibus Angliæ* and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini*.

Roger of Hoveden (d. 1201–02) wrote his *Chronica* between the years 1190 and 1201, and the work began to be disseminated in the last few years of his life (*Lex d. MAs* 7, 943–4). In the first three of the four books of the *Chronica*, Roger shows that he was much more a compiler of existing source material than an author in his own right (*RH* I, xiii–xxxvi). After reporting the events of 1180, Roger inserts a text entitled *Liber de legibus Angliæ* into his work (*RH* II, 215–241). This text is a collection of laws issued during the reigns of Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror. It ends with a genealogy of the Dukes of Normandy. At one point *Liber de legibus* describes the division of England between Knútr ríki and Edmund Ironside in 1016 (*RH* II, 235; emphasis added):

Post Aldredum vero Eadmundus filius ejus regnavit, fere **novem mensibus**, in quibus viriliter contra Danorum regem Chnutum **quinquies** dimicavit. Ultimo vero bello peracto concordēs invicem effecti sunt; regnumque per dimidium dividerunt; et [una] medietas Angliæ [Chnuto] et altera medietas cessit Ædmundo, eo tenore, quod si quis eorum alterum superviveret, regnum **superstes totum** possideret . . . post mensem **Edmundus ex hac luce**, proh dolor! subtrahitur. Chnutus vero inde **totum regnum** suscepit Angliæ, regnavitque fere octodecim annis.

(After Ethelred, his son Edmund ruled nearly nine months in which he fought five hard battles against King Knútr of the Danes. When the last battle had been concluded, peace terms were made, and they divided the kingdom in half. The one half of England [was given to Knútr] and the other half he yielded to Edmund, with this provision, that if one were to outlive the other, the survivor would possess the entire kingdom . . . After a month, Edmund (alas!) was taken from this light. Thereupon Knútr took over the entire kingdom of England, and ruled nearly eighteen years.)

There is a very close textual correspondence between the account found in *Liber de legibus* and that in *HN* (*MHN* 122–23; emphasis added):

Post captam Lundoniam contra regem Edmundum **quinquies in IX mensibus** fortissime pugnaverunt; demum defessis utrisque reges, scilicet Edmundus et Canutus, tale inter se pactum statuerunt, ut dum viverent ambo insulam æque regerent, sed qui **superstes** fieret, **totam** teneret. Tunc cum regnasset mense uno, **præsentē luce privatur Edmundus, totumque regnum** possedit Canutus.

(After the capture of London they fought five times most fiercely against King Edmund in nine months. At last when both sides had grown weary, the kings, that is to say Edmund and Knútr, established such a peace between them, that while they both lived, they would rule the island equally, but he who was the survivor would rule the entire [island]. Then when he had reigned one month, Edmund was delivered from the light of this world, and Knútr possessed the entire kingdom.)

In addition to the similarity in vocabulary, the specific condition "if one outlived the other" is particular to these two texts and is not found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, John of Worcester's *Chronicon*, or Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. Additional accounts of the agreement between Knútr and Edmund are found in later Norse texts, such as *Knýtlinga saga* (*ÍF* 35, 119), *Fagrskinna* (*Fsk*

211–12), and *Morkinskinna* (Msk 22–23), but it is unlikely that *HN*'s account is an independent manifestation of Scandinavian tradition. The version in *Knyttlinga saga* differs from *Liber de legibus* in that it refers to intermediaries who negotiate between the kings. The accounts in *Fagrskinna* and *Morkinskinna* describe a later agreement between Magnús góði and Hǫrða-Knútr, which was “modelled on that which Knútr the old and Edward [sic] made in England” (“Var þessi sætt gǫr eptir því sem þeir gamli Knútr ok Játvarðr gǫrðu á Englandi” [*Fsk* 211–12]). In all three texts the terms of the peace differ from the accounts of *HN* and *Liber de legibus* by stipulating that one king must die without an heir in order for the surviving king to receive both halves of the kingdom. Thus the textual correspondence is closest between *HN* and Roger of Hoveden's version of *Liber de legibus* and suggests that either Roger's *Chronica*, or more likely, an older version of *Liber de legibus*, was used as a source by the *HN* author for the details of the events of 1016 (*Fsk* c-ci; Ellehøj 1965, 172–74).

The possibility that the author of *HN* used *Liber de legibus* as a source is reinforced by another close correspondence between *Liber de legibus* and *HN*. The following reference to Henry I is found in *HN* (MHN 91; emphasis added):

iste genuit Wilelmum rufum et **Henricum fratrem ejus, qui in prophetia Merlini regis leo justitiæ prænominatus est.**

(He begot William Rufus and Henry his brother, who in the prophesy of King Merlin was called the “lion of justice.”)

Compare this reference in *HN* with that of *Liber de legibus* (RH II, 241; emphasis added):

Cui successit **Henricus frater eius**, et regnavit triginta sex annis. Hic erat pastor ferarum et custos nemorum, **quem Merlinus Ambrosius leonem justitiæ** in Historia Regum **nominavit.**

(Henry his brother succeeded him, and [he] reigned thirty six years. He was the shepherd of beasts and guardian of the forests, whom Merlin Ambrosius named “the lion of justice” in the History of the Kings.)

The *Historia regum Britannie* containing the *Prophecies of Merlin* was first written by Geoffrey of Monmouth ca. 1138 and immediately became widely disseminated in Western Europe (*Lex. d. MAs* 4, 1263; Fletcher 1901, 461–9; Crick 1991, 1–12). An Icelandic version of the *Prophecies* (“Merlínusspá”)

was composed by Gunnlaugr Leifsson sometime before his death in 1218–19 (*KL* II, 556), and Icelandic versions of the *Historia regum* (*Breta sögur*) were circulating in the beginning of the thirteenth century (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 47).

Scholars disagree, however, about exactly which historical work[s] influenced the *HN* account. The historian who first expressly equated Geoffrey's “lion of justice” with the contemporary historical figure of King Henry I was Orderic Vitalis (d. ca. 1142), and Eiliv Skard points to Orderic as the most likely source for *HN*'s reference, although the textual correspondence between *HN* and Orderic's history is not close (*OV* VI, 386–89; Skard 1930, 77). Gustav Storm believed that the *HN* version was derived from *Liber de legibus* as found in Roger's *Chronica*, and he printed the relevant part of that text in the footnotes to his edition of *HN* (MHN 91).

Perhaps the greatest difficulty for scholars has been *HN*'s incorrect reference to Merlin as a “king” (“regis Merlini”). This mistake does not occur in Roger's *Chronica* or any of the Anglo-Norman historians or redactors of Geoffrey. Geoffrey's *Historia* was immensely popular in the Middle Ages, however, and hundreds of manuscripts of his work are still extant (Crick 1991, xi–xvi). As of today, there is no edition available that accounts for all manuscript variants (*GM* xlvi–liv), and it is at least possible that there once existed some variant tradition which referred to Merlin as a king, and which served as the source of the *HN* version.

Another solution to the problem might be found in the fact that the Icelandic “Merlínusspá” once refers to Merlin as “jǫfurr” (*Hauksbók* 272). This is a poetic word which can mean either “king,” “prince,” or simply “distinguished man” (*Lex. Poet.* 330–31). Perhaps there was a parallel Icelandic tradition which regarded Merlin as some kind of a king (Skard 1930, 77 n. 1; Hanssen 1949b, 17), and the *HN* author combined the information he found in an Anglo-Norman source with an Icelandic tradition also known to him. Evidence for the *HN* author's having synthesized Scandinavian and Anglo-Norman historical traditions is found elsewhere in the text when he traces the genealogy of the Norman dukes back to Gǫngu-Hrólf (Rollo), the founder of the duchy of Normandy, and gives the name of Rollo's father, Rognvaldr jarl of Mœrir (MHN 90). None of the Anglo-Norman histories names Rollo's father (*OV* II, 6–8, 276; *WJ* I, 7, 35–7; *WM* 200; *Dudo* 25–6), but Icelandic tradition does (“Rognvaldr jarl á Mœri . . . átti Ragnhildi . . . Þeira son var Ívarr, er fell í Suðreyjum með Haraldi konungi enum hárfagra. Annarr var Gǫngu-Hrólf, er vann Norðmandi; frá honum eru Rúðujarlar komnir ok Englakonungar” [*Land* II, 314]). Furthermore, though various Icelandic sagas recount the genealogies of the dukes of Normandy, they seldom do so correctly (Ellehøj 1965, 163–71). The fact that the *HN* author gives an accurate list of all the

dukes of Normandy and traces their lineage all the way back to Rognvaldr and Ragnhildr suggests that he included both Anglo-Norman and native Scandinavian material in his catalogue of the dukes of Normandy.

It should be noted, however, that Halvdan Koht believed that the reference in *HN* to the *Prophecies of Merlin* was derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth, despite the incorrect reference to Merlin as king (Koht, quoted in Skard 1930, 77), and there is, indeed, an additional echo of Geoffrey in *HN*. In his description of the mountains of Norway, the author of *HN* makes a strange reference to gold flowing through the hooves of cattle (*MHN* 82):

Nam quondam Saxones illo adventantes et per ungulas boum eundem amnem transnatantium auri metallum inesse deprehendentes furtim conflatum infinitum detulerunt aurum.

(For formerly the Saxons arriving from that place and perceiving that very river of gold through the hooves of the cattle crossing [it], they secretly carried off much smelted gold.)

The account of gold flowing from the hooves of cattle is not found in *Liber de legibus*, and it is a detail almost certainly derived from Geoffrey's *Prophecies* (Hanssen 1949b, 17). Geoffrey's text reads as follows (*GM* 75–6):

Succedet leo iusticie ad cuius rugitum Gallicane turres et insulani dracones tremebunt. In diebus eius aurum ex lilio et urtica extorquebitur et argentum ex ungulis mugientium manabit.

(The lion of justice will come next, at whose roar the towers of Gaul and the dragons of the island will tremble. In his days gold will be squeezed from the lily and the nettle, and silver will flow from the hooves of lowing animals.)

This common motif suggests that a version of Geoffrey's *Prophecies* was also known to the *HN* author. Perhaps he knew both a Latin version of the *Historia*, from which he derived the motif of precious metals flowing from the hooves of cattle, and also an Icelandic version, which referred to Merlin as a "distinguished man." The *HN* author simply translated "jöfurr" as "rex."

This investigation of the *HN* has shown that the author used a wide variety of literary sources for his work. The description of volcanic activity on Iceland, as well as the vocabulary found in the first nineteen lines after the prologue, indicates that the *HN* author used a written text of Honorius Augustodunensis' *Imago mundi*. There is also some literary connection

between *HN*, the Danish *Chronicon Lethrense*, and Gerald of Wales's *Topographica Hibernica*, but it is impossible to determine how these texts are related. An additional important source for the *HN* author was Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, but his use of this work will be discussed in the next chapter.

The *HN* author also knew several Anglo-Norman historical works. His description of the division of England between Knútr and Edmund suggests that he was familiar with a version of *Liber de legibus Angliae*. The extant version of this work is found in Roger of Hoveden's *Chronica*, but since Roger wrote at the very end of the twelfth century, it is most likely that the *HN* author knew an earlier redaction. The *HN* author was also familiar with a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophecies of Merlin*, but it is difficult to identify which version this was. The author's reference to Henry I as the "leo iustitiae" could stem directly from Geoffrey, from *Liber de legibus*, or from other Anglo-Norman writers, but his reference to precious metals flowing from the hooves of cattle is so unique that it must be derived from Geoffrey's *Prophecies*. However, no extant redaction of *Liber de legibus* or of Geoffrey's work corroborates *HN*'s reference to Merlin as a "king." The Icelandic "Merlínusspá" does refer to Merlin as "jöfurr," and this word can mean "princely" or "royal." But while we know that Gunnlaugr Leifsson composed "Merlínusspá" sometime before his death in 1218–19 (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 128), it is impossible to be more specific than this, and it is entirely possible that *HN* antedates the Icelandic poem. Thus the evidence is too sparse to conclude that the *HN* author used both a Latin and an Icelandic version of the *Prophecies*. The most one can say with certainty is that if *HN* was composed in the Orkneys, the author was writing in a place where he could have had access to a wide variety of historical sources, not all of which can be identified today.

Agrip af Nóregskonungasögum

The third synoptic history, the anonymous Norse text called *Agrip af Nóregskonungasögum* is textually related to both Theodoricus' *Historia* and the *HN*. Close verbal correspondences demonstrate that the author of *Agrip* borrowed directly from Theodoricus (Sigurður Nordal 1914, 25–9), and there are also textual correspondences between *Agrip* and *HN* (see Chapter 1). But additional literary borrowings from non-Scandinavian sources are not found in *Agrip*, and the questions surrounding its relationship to the other two synoptic histories do not promise to shed any new light on foreign influences on the kings' sagas. *Agrip* is, however, still very important as a source for later

writers of kings' sagas, and it is worth mentioning this Norse text here, in conjunction with the other synoptic histories, so that it not be forgotten.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Our investigation of the non-native literary sources for the Icelandic *Íslendingabók*, and the Latin histories, *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium* and *Historia Norwegiae*, has shown that there are both similarities and differences in the use the authors made of their sources. All three authors availed themselves of foreign sources, and they used these sources to supplement the native traditions already known to them, but they did so for different purposes. Ari was primarily concerned with chronology, and he used foreign sources to accomplish the fundamental task of bringing the events of Iceland's history into accord with the Christian system of dating used throughout the rest of Europe. Theodoricus used foreign sources primarily to embellish his narrative. It is true that he refers to the *Historia Normannorum* to ascertain where Óláfr Haraldsson had been baptized, but otherwise his frequent references to great writers of his day, and to the great works of classical Latin literature, add little substance to his work and seem to be designed primarily to impress his audience with his erudition. Of the three texts discussed above, the author of *HN* integrated foreign sources most thoroughly into the content of his narrative. He made extensive use of Adam of Bremen, and when he wished to recount the terms of the peace made between Edmund Ironside and Knútr ríki in 1016, he consulted an Anglo-Norman source. He continues the list of Rollo's descendants down to include the Anglo-Norman kings of recent memory, but he also traced the descent of Rollo back to his father, the Norwegian Rognvaldr jarl of Mœrir. This is information which must stem from Icelandic tradition, because it is corroborated only by the genealogy given in *Landnámabók*. In creating his own history, the *HN* author combined native Scandinavian and foreign historical traditions to an extent not done by either Ari or Theodoricus. His increased reliance on foreign sources closely parallels the nearly contemporaneous literary efforts of the early authors of kings' sagas in Iceland.

Perhaps the biggest differences among the three authors' use of foreign sources lie in the nature of the sources themselves. Those used by Ari were primarily religious: a life of St. Edmund, Bede's history of the early Church in England, and a history of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen. It is not surprising that religious works such as these lent themselves most readily to Ari, who was a priest, and who was writing in a country which could then still be regarded as recently converted. In the case of Theodoricus, the list of the

sources he mentions, as well as those he used but fails to mention, comprises a random sample of the literary works which formed the basis of a twelfth-century Continental education. Arne Odd Johnsen is almost certainly correct when he states that Boethius, Hugh of St. Victor, and Sigebert of Gembloux are names which point to the educational institutions of France, very likely St. Victor outside of Paris (Johnsen 1939).

It is significant that the *HN* author used several Anglo-Norman historical sources. The earliest Icelandic scholars to travel abroad, Ísleifr Gizurarson and Gizurr Ísleifsson, had studied at Herford in Germany, and the next generation of clerics are believed to have studied in France: Sæmundr Sigfússon returned from his studies in "Frakkland" and Jón Ögmundarson returned to Iceland in the company of the cleric "Rikini," who is repeatedly described as "franzeis" (*Bsk* I, 168, 173, 239, 246; see Chapter 1). By the second half of the twelfth century, however, Icelandic scholars were traveling to England, and Þorlákr Þorhallsson and his nephew Páll Jónsson studied in Lincoln. Anglo-Norman England had clearly grown in importance to Icelanders wishing to acquire either their educations or educational materials. When the *HN* author used the history of Adam of Bremen, he was consulting a source which had already been available in Iceland in Ari's time. But his use of the Anglo-Norman sources *Prophecies of Merlin*, *Liber de legibus*, and perhaps also Gerald of Wales's *Topographica Hibernica*, reflects a changing state of affairs in the North at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. Standard works such as the histories of Bede and Adam still existed in Iceland, but the stock of older, non-native literary sources was being supplemented by newer Anglo-Norman materials. They were brought from the Anglo-Norman territories in France and Britain to the North; to the Orkneys and eventually to Iceland. Not only were Scandinavian authors willing to make use of non-native sources, but these sources were regarded as authoritative, and they were becoming increasingly available. Many of the same literary sources which were available to the *HN* author in the Orkneys, and additional sources, would soon be brought to Iceland, if they had not been already.

Chapter Three

Foreign Sources in the Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason

There were a number of identifiable foreign influences on the traditions associated with Óláfr Tryggvason already by the time Oddr wrote his independent saga. Foreign sources used by the various authors of sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason include Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, the *Libri dialogorum* of Gregory the Great, *De Carolo Magno* by Notker Balbulus, monk of St. Gall, the *Vita Martini* of Sulpicius Severus, and the anonymous Anglo-Norman *Vita Haraldi*.

ADAM OF BREMEN'S *GESTA HAMMABURGENSIS ECCLESIAE PONTIFICUM*

The only sources specifically referred to by Oddr Snorrason in his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason are the Icelanders Ari Þorgilsson and Sæmundr Sigfússon (see Chapter 1). However, one verifiable and important foreign literary influence not mentioned by the authors of Óláfr Tryggvason's saga is Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. Ari had consulted Adam's history to determine the year of Óláfr's death in battle according to the Christian calendar (see Chapter 2), and the author of *Historia Norwegiae* and Oddr Snorrason both made use of it in writing their histories as well.

Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, the *Historia Norwegiae*, and the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason

The indebtedness of the *HN* author to Adam of Bremen is at times obvious. The names of the bishops who came to Norway from England with St. Óláfr must have been taken directly from Adam's history. Adam gives the names "Sigafrið, Grimkil, Rudolf et Bernard" (*AB* 79), and the *HN* author only

latinizes their spelling to "Grimkellus, Bernardus, Rodulfus, Sigfridus" (*MHN* 124; Bugge 1873, 27–28). It has also been argued that the *HN* author modelled his prologue, and perhaps also based his geographical descriptions of the North, on that of Adam (Bugge 1873, 23–29; Steinnes 1946–48, 17; see Note 1).

According to Adam, the first missionary bishop to Norway was a man named Johannes, who came from the British Isles with Óláfr Tryggvason (*AB* 67):

Alii dicunt olim et tunc ab Anglia quosdam episcopos vel presbyteros euangelizandi gratia egressos a domo ab eis que Olaph baptizatum et ceteros, quorum praecipuus esset quidam Iohannes episcopus, et alii postea dicendi.

(Some say that at that time [he] left England [with] those same bishops and priests by whom Óláfr and others had been baptized for the purpose of converting [Norway]. The foremost of these was a certain bishop John, and others who will be mentioned later.)

Adam states again later (*AB* 181):

In Nortmanniam primus ab Anglia venit quidam Iohannes episcopus, qui regem conversum cum populo baptizavit.

(There was a certain bishop John, who came to Norway from England, and he baptized the converted king along with his people.)

The name of the first missionary bishop is repeated by the author of *HN* when he describes Óláfr Tryggvason's return to Norway from the British Isles (*MHN* 115):

Olavus . . . ad Norwegiam transfretavit, habens secum Johannem episcopum et Thangbrandum presbyterum, quem ad Glaciales misit praedicare.

(Óláfr . . . crossed to Norway, having with him Bishop John and the priest Thangbrand, whom he sent to the North to preach.)

That this reference is derived from Adam's history is shown by the fact that Norse tradition, as attested by Theodoricus, *Ágrip*, and *Heimskringla*, identifies the first missionary bishop to Norway as "Sigurðr" or "Sigwardus" (*MHN* 15; *Ágrip* 30; *Hkr* I, 326).

A parallel conflict between native Scandinavian tradition on the one hand and Adam of Bremen on the other, is found in the various writers' attempts to locate the battle in which Óláfr Tryggvason lost his life. Theodoricus, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* all place this battle at a place called "Svöldr" (*MHN* 24; *ÍF* 29, 147; *Hkr* I, 352). Adam of Bremen, however, writes as follows (*AB* 68):

Est autem brevis traiectus Baltici maris apud Halsinburg, in quo loco Seland a Sconia videri possit, familiare latibulum pyratibus. Ibi ergo congressi, Nortmanni a Danis sunt victi et fusi sunt.

(There is, however, a short crossing of the Baltic sea near the town of Halsing, in which place Seeland can be seen from Scania. This is a familiar hiding place of pirates. Therefore, they met there, and the Norwegians were defeated and put to flight by the Danes.)

The *HN* author must have known Adam's account, because only Adam and he, as well as the author of *Ágrip*, who in turn may have used the *HN* as a source, report that the battle took place "near Seeland" ("juxta Sælandiam" [*MHN* 117]; "fyrir Sjóland" [*Ágrip* 32]).

Another borrowing from Adam of Bremen by the *HN* author might be found in both authors' accounts of the demise of Óláfr's queen, Þyri (Thore), after Óláfr's death. Adam's account displays contempt for her, and he reports that after the death of her husband, the grief-stricken woman was rumoured to have ceased to eat and died of starvation "as she deserved" ("Uxor eius post mortem viri fame inediaque miserabiliter vitam consumpsit, ut digna erat" [*AB* 68]). *HN* also reports that she died of grief ("Ast conjux intemperater viri mortem ferens dolore deperiit" [*MHN* 119]). It is possible that Adam and *HN* merely give two independent accounts based on native Scandinavian tradition, but the repetition of the same phrase and the same case use ("viri mortem") hints at another textual borrowing from Adam by the *HN* author (Ellehøj 1965, 153 n. 46). This is supported by the fact that Þyri's fate is not mentioned by either Theodoricus, *Ágrip*, *Fagrskinna*, or *Heimskringla*. Oddr Snorrason's saga of Óláfr Tryggvason is the only other Norse source to give an account of Queen Þyri's miserable end (*Oddr* 237–38), but it is an open question whether Oddr simply expanded upon the account found in *HN*, whether he independently made use of Adam's work, or whether his version is a further result of native tradition.

Not only textual correspondences, but also occasional conflicting literary accounts suggest that the *HN* author was familiar with Adam of Bremen's history. According to Norse tradition, Óláfr Tryggvason was the first great

missionary king to the North. He was responsible for the conversion of Iceland, and he was considered to have prepared the foundation of the Church in Norway for the later saint, Óláfr Haraldsson (Turville-Petre 1953, 191). Adam, however, had a very low opinion of King Óláfr Tryggvason. He believed that, although Óláfr Tryggvason had been a nominal Christian, he later apostasized and thus deserved his death (Ellehøj 1965, 151; Taranger 1895, 197). After describing the death of Óláfr Tryggvason Adam writes an epitaph for the Norwegian king (*AB* 68–9):

Narrant eum aliqui illum christianum fuisse, quidam christianitatis desertorem; omnes autem affirmant peritum auguriorum, servatorem sortium, et in avium prognosticis omnem spem suam posuisse . . . Nam et artis magicae, ut aiunt, studio deditus, omnes, quibus illa redundat patria, maleficos habuit domesticos, eorumque deceptus errore periit.

(Some say that he had been a Christian, [but] certain other ones [say that he] had abandoned Christianity. All, however, confirm that he was skillful in divinations, was a caster of lots, and that he had placed all his hopes in the auguries of birds . . . For, devoted to the art of magic, he kept sorcerers, with which that country abounds, as servants, and deceived by their error, he perished.)

Such a view could neither be reproduced nor ignored by the Norse historians who knew Adam's history. They corrected what they must have viewed as a mistake by Adam, sometimes so blatantly that it must have been done in light of an awareness of Adam's work (Ellehøj 1965, 155; Lönnroth 1963, 65). To counter Adam's claim that Óláfr had believed in witchcraft and the "auguries of birds," the *HN* author added a hardly believable detail, but one which was understandable in light of what Adam had previously written about his hero, to his account of Óláfr's last battle, and he informs us that Óláfr had no fewer than forty clerics with him at the time of his death ("clericos etiam XL in XXX spatiolis puppi proximus continebat" [*MHN* 118]).

Adam of Bremen and Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*

Not only the author of the *Historia Norwegiae* knew Adam's history. Oddr Snorrason made use of it for his own work. Compare, for example, Adam of Bremen's account of the Danes' conversion to Christianity and the later expanded version by Oddr (*AB* 57; emphasis added):

Dani ad fidem sunt per **Popponem quendam** conversi, qui **ferrum candens** et ignitum in modo cyrotecae formatum, **coram populo sine**

laesione portavit, quod **videns rex Haraldus**, abiecta ydololatria, **cum toto populo ad colendum verum Deum se convertit**. Poppo autem in episcopum est promotus.

(The Danes were converted to the faith through a certain Poppo, who carried glowing iron and fire shaped in the manner of a glove before the people without injury. Seeing this, King Haraldr, rejecting idolotry, converted himself together with the entire population to worshipping the true God. Moreover Poppo was promoted into a bishopric.)

The account given by Oddr contains several close correspondences to Adam's account (*Oddr* 52–3; emphasis added):

Ok nú kómu þeir allir á eit þing, ok hefir þat fjölmennast verit í Danmörk. Þá stóð upp á þinginu biskup, sá er var með keisara, **er Poppa hét**. Hann talaði trú fyrir þeim vel ok lengi. Haraldr konungr mælti, er hann hafði heyrð töluna: "Ekki er þat at ætla, at ek muna skipask við tölu þína eina saman, nema ek sjá þat, at þessi trú fylgi meiri kraptr, er þér boðit, en inni er vér höfum áðr." Biskup mælti þá: "þat skal ok eigi at skorta, at reyna skal trú vára. Nú skal taka **járn** ok gera **glóanda**, ok mun ek bera þat í lófa mér nú fét . . . lífir mér við bruna svá at hönd mín sé heil, þá skal lið yðr trú taka." Ok nú játta þessu bæði konungr ok jarl ok allir þeira menn. **Síðan gengr biskup með járnit, ok brann hann eigi**. Svá lífði guð honum. Ok er **Haraldr konungr sér þetta, þá tektr hann trú, ok allir hans menn**, því at öllum þótti mikill um vert þetta ták. Ok var þá skírðr allr Dana herr.

(And now they all came together to the þing meeting, and this was the most populous meeting that has ever been in Denmark. Then at the þing meeting the bishop who was with the emperor stood up, whose name was Poppo. He spoke about the faith to them well and for a long time. King Haraldr said when he had heard the speech: "you cannot hope that I shall be converted because of your speech alone, unless I see that more power accompany this faith which you preach, than that which we have held before." Then the bishop said: "This will not be lacking either, that I shall prove our faith. I will now take iron and make it glowing and I will carry this in my hand nine steps . . . [if God] will protect me against the fire so that my hand will be unharmed, then your people shall take the faith." And now both the king and the jarl agreed to this, as well as all their men. Then the bishop walked with the iron, and he was not burned. Thus did God protect him. And when King Haraldr saw this, then he accepted the faith, and all his men as well, because this sign

seemed to be of great importance to them all. And then the entire army of the Danes was baptized.)

Oddr's expanded account of the Danish conversion closely follows Adam, both in the manner of the reported proceedings and in the name of the missionary responsible for them. There are additional echoes of Adam in Oddr's text. For example, only Adam and Oddr tell the story of Óláfr Tryggvason's queen, Pyri, dying of starvation out of grief for her dead husband after the battle of Svöldr (*AB* 68; *Oddr* 257), and there is also the issue of the conflicting traditions concerning the name of the first bishop brought to Norway by Óláfr Tryggvason (see above). Theodoricus (*MHN* 15), *Ágrip* (30), and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I, 326) all identify this man as "Sigwardus" or "Sigurðr." Only *HN* (*MHN* 115) and Oddr (*Oddr* 91) agree with Adam (*AB* 67, 181) and give the name of the first missionary bishop to Norway as "Iohannes" or "Jón" (Storm *MHN* xxiii). Oddr's account reads as follows (*Oddr* 91; emphasis added):

Óláfr Tryggvason fór ór landi þessu sinni með v skipum ok vestr til Englands, þá er hafði einn vetr verit konungr í Nóręgi; fór hann aptr um haustit til Nóręgs. Ok var þá í **för með honum Jón byskup ok** margir prestar, **Þangbrandr prestr** ok Þormóðr **ok margir aðrir guðs þjónar.**

(Óláfr Tryggvason left the country this time with five ships and traveled west to England when he had been king in Norway for one year. Then in the Fall he traveled back to Norway. And there was on the journey with him Bishop John and many priests; the priest Þangbrandr and Þormóðr and many other servants of God.)

Oddr's account closely echoes that of *HN*, which in turn is most likely based on Adam's history (*HN* 115; emphasis added):

Olavus . . . ad Norwegiam transfretavit, **habens secum Johannem episcopum et Thangbrandum presbyterum**, quem ad Glaciales misit praedicare; habuit etiam alios plures dei ministros.

(Óláfr . . . crossed to Norway, having with him bishop John and the priest Thangbrand, whom he sent to the North to preach. He also had many other servants of God.)

Oddr must have used Adam's text as a source either directly or indirectly through *HN*. Both traditions, one identifying the first bishop as "Sigurðr," and another which called him "John" seem to have been known and coexisted

for a time in Scandinavia (Lönnroth 1963, 59). The *Acta Sanctorum in Seljo* calls him "Siguardus," and Oddr followed the *Acta* closely elsewhere (Turville-Petre 1953, 192). This apparently resulted in a bit of confusion concerning the name of the first bishop on the part of Oddr himself. At two points in his text Oddr designates this man "Bishop John, who was called by the other name Sigurðr" ("Jón Biskup, er Sigurðr hét öðrum nafni" [*Oddr* 98, 246]).

We established in chapter two that Adam's history was used as a source by Ari Þorgilsson for his *Íslendingabók*. Therefore one or more copies of it must have been available in Iceland at least from the beginning of the twelfth century. However, the verbal correspondence is close enough to suggest that Oddr's identification of the first bishop to Norway as "Jón" was indirectly derived from Adam by way of *HN*. Previous scholars have alleged that this may have been the case (Storm 1875, 11–13; Driscoll *Ágrip* 1995, xv), but this assumption is not without difficulties. Such a borrowing would require a fairly early dating for *HN* if Oddr wrote his saga ca. 1190, and with only the possible exceptions of *Ágrip* (Andersson 1985, 201; see Chapter 1) and perhaps *Heimskringla*, *HN* does not seem to have been used as a source by any other Icelandic writers of history. Oddr is not mentioned as ever having left Iceland, though it is tempting to speculate that he might have accompanied his abbot Karl Jónsson to Norway in 1184–89 and perhaps come into contact with *HN* there. We may ask, then, whether Oddr could have had access to the *HN* text, or whether he independently made use of Adam for the first part of this passage, and coincidentally named the bishop's companions with a nearly exact syntactic correspondence to the *HN* text. This strikes me as unlikely. The identification of Norway's first bishop as "Johannes" or "Jón" and the account of the demise of Óláfr Tryggvason's queen, Pyri (*Oddr* 237–38; see above) are descriptions which occur only in Adam, *HN*, and Oddr's saga, and the verbal correspondence between Oddr's and *HN*'s naming of Thangbrandr and the other members of bishop Jón's group is so close that some kind of textual relationship must have existed between the three texts.

GREGORY THE GREAT'S *LIBRI DIALOGORUM*

The foreign source for the saga of Óláfr Tryggvason which is perhaps easiest to identify is the *Libri dialogorum* of Pope Gregory the Great. That the writings of Gregory the Great should have influenced the early clerical writers of the kings' sagas is hardly surprising. The *Dialogues* was popular all over christian Europe throughout the Middle Ages, and its presence in medieval Iceland is attested in six different catalogues of Icelandic book collections compiled between 1381 and 1461 (Olmer 1902, 15). Extensive fragments of an

Icelandic version of the *Dialogues* are preserved in MS Cd. 677, 4to, which is believed to date from the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century at the latest (Unger *HMS* II, x).

Óláfr Tryggvason and the hermit, and Totila and Benedict

Scholars have noticed the close similarity between two stories related in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great and two episodes first told in *Ágrip* and *HN* about the lives of Óláfr Tryggvason and St. Óláfr (*Ágrip* 28–31; *MHN* 114–15; *Hkr* I, civ, 266–67; *LS* 64–5; Turville-Petre 1953, 135–7; Lönnroth 1963, 60–61; Þorvaldur Bjarnarson 1878, xv). The first of these stories in Gregory's work concerns the Gothic king Totila, who hears of the monk Benedict's powers of prophecy. Hoping to test him, Totila disguises one of his retainers as himself and sends the retainer to Benedict, who recognizes the deception immediately. Totila and the retainer are both impressed, and Totila then respectfully comes to Benedict, who foretells his fate (*Dialogues* 180–84; see Note 2). The extant Icelandic fragments of Gregory's *Dialogues* contain a translation of this story (*HMS* I, 211–12), and a modified version of the same tale is recounted concerning Óláfr Tryggvason's encounter with a hermit in the British Isles in *Ágrip* (28–31) and in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I, 266–67). Óláfr Haraldsson experiences the encounter in *HN* (*MHN* 114–15) and again in the *Legendary saga of St. Óláfr* (*LS* 64–5), but in the case of the *Legendary saga* the episode has been shown to be a later borrowing by the author, perhaps from *Ágrip* (Sigurður Nordal 1914, 36).

The trolls and Óláfr, and the demons and the Jew

There is another episode found in Oddr's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* which is derived from Gregory's *Dialogues*. According to Oddr, while in Naumudalr, two of Óláfr's retainers left his ship at night and proceeded to where they saw a fire burning in a cave. The two then overheard the conversation of several trolls, who told how they had tried to harm King Óláfr (*Oddr* 174–78). This is based on a story told in Gregory's *Dialogues* where a Jew, while spending the night in a temple, overhears demons telling competing accounts of who had most furthered the cause of evil. The competition ends when one demon tells how he took the form of a woman and tempted Bishop Andreas (*Dialogues* 280–82; see Note 2). As in Gregory's account, Oddr's version features trolls who tell various tales of mischief, and the last troll to speak also tells how he, in the form of a woman, tried to tempt the king sexually.

There is no doubt that Gregory's *Dialogues* was the source for these two tales about Óláfr Tryggvason. The presence of at least six different manuscripts

in Iceland in the later Middle Ages containing the *Dialogues*, as well as our still extant Icelandic translation from ca. 1200, shows that Gregory's work was popular and widely disseminated in Iceland already by the time of the composition of the earliest kings' sagas. The Þingeyrar monastery almost certainly had a copy of the *Dialogues*. Oddr obviously borrowed and modified the tale of the Jew who overheard the demons, and the authors of both *Ágrip* and *HN*, or perhaps the common source to both of these works (see Chapter 1), used Gregory's story of Benedict and Totila. Snorri later chose to keep the story of Óláfr Tryggvason and the hermit in his saga of this king, but he omitted Oddr's fanciful account of the trolls, and he chose not to repeat the story of the hermit in his own "Óláfs saga helga."

SULPICIOUS SEVERUS' *VITA SANCTI MARTINI*

Sulpicius wrote his *Vita* of the Gallic bishop and saint, Martin of Tours, around the year 400, and the work was extremely influential throughout the Middle Ages (Curtius 1948, 158, 428). St. Martin was very popular in twelfth-century Iceland as well. He was the patron saint of at least ten Icelandic churches (Guðbrandur Jónsson quoted in Lönnroth 1963, 70), and a relic of St. Martin was preserved in the cathedral at Hólar from the beginning of the twelfth century (*Bsk* I, 169, 242, 468). An Icelandic translation of Sulpicius' *Vita Sancti Martini* is still extant in three different manuscripts (printed in C. R. Unger's edition of *Heilagra manna sögur* [*HMS* I, 554–642]). Unger dates the oldest of these manuscripts to around the year 1200 (*HMS* II, xiv–xiv).

Vita Martini, Oddr's saga, and *Heimskringla*

In Oddr's saga (*Oddr* 131–34) and in *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I, 312–314), Óðinn visits King Óláfr Tryggvason. Later in Oddr's saga Þórr visits King Óláfr as well (*Oddr* 173–174). While the details of these incidents are almost certainly original literary creations, most likely first composed by Oddr and then re-worked and expanded by Snorri, the literary inspiration for the Norse versions of the tale can most likely be traced back to Sulpicius' *Vita Sancti Martini*. In the Icelandic translation, one sees that the text has already been adapted to a Scandinavian perspective (*Sulp* 300; emphasis added):

Frequenter autem diabolus, dum mille nocendi artibus sanctum uirum conabatur inludere, uisibilem se ei **formis diuersissimis** ingerebat. Nam interdum **in Iouis personam**, plerumque **Mercuri**, sæpe etiam se **Veneris** ac **Mineruae** transfiguratum uultibus offerebat; aduersus quem semper interritus **signo se crucis** et orationis auxilio **protegebat**.

(Frequently however, the devil, when he tried to deceive the holy man with a thousand [different] skills for harming [him], appeared to him in many different forms. For sometimes he presented himself transformed into the person of Jupiter, and more often of Mercury, and often even transformed with the faces of Venus or Athena, against whom [Martin] protected himself, always fearless, with the sign of the cross, and with the help of prayer.)

Compare the Icelandic version found in *Martinus saga* (HMS I, 569; emphasis added):

Djöflar kómu ok **stundom** at freista hans í **ýmsum líkjum**, ok allra of-tast í **líki þórs** eða **Óðins**, eða **Freyjar**. En Martinus **hafði krossmark** at skildi við allri freistni þeira. En hann kenndi þá, í hverjungi líkjum, sem þeir váru, ok nefndi hvern þeira at nafni ok fekk hverjum þeira þá kveðju, er (þeir) váru verðir: þór kalladi hann heimskan, en Óðin deigan, en Freyju portkonu (HMS I, S. 569).

(Devils also came to tempt him sometimes in various likenesses, most often in the likeness of Þórr, or of Óðinn, or of Freyja. But Martinus had the sign of the cross on the shield, so that he could withstand all their temptations. And he recognized them, in whichever likeness they were, and named each one of them by name, and gave each one of them the greeting they deserved. He called Þórr "foolish," and Óðinn "cowardly," and Freyja "whore.")

It is interesting to note that, already at the time of the Icelandic translation, the Roman gods named by Sulpicius (Jove, Mercury, Venus, and Minerva) have been changed to the Norse deities Þórr, Óðinn, and Freyja, and that the Icelandic translator of the *Vita Martini* has placed the classical pagan gods in a Scandinavian context. This renaming might have been facilitated by the relationship between their names and the Old Norse names for the days of the week (Strutynski 1975, 376–82). A creative saga author could easily have been inspired to expand upon such a passage, and in Oddr's saga (Oddr 131–34) and in *Heimskringla* (Hkr I, 312–14) Óðinn comes to King Óláfr Tryggvason in the guise of a stranger. Due to his extensive knowledge of heroic past deeds, he temporarily beguiles the king, and tricks him into staying up late in conversation. In Oddr's saga Þórr appears to King Óláfr in another episode as well (Oddr 173–74).

There is no direct literary source for these expanded Norse accounts of the gods' visits, but it seems very likely that this particular passage, either in Sulpicius' Latin *Vita Sancti Martini* or in one of the Icelandic translations,

inspired Oddr to embellish and expand upon the tale in his own work. This is supported by the fact that, in Oddr's saga, Bishop Martin himself also appears and visits King Óláfr in a dream (Oddr 94):

Ok um nótt þá vitraðisk honum inn helgi Martinus biskup, ok mælti við hann. "Þat hefir hér verit siðr í þessu landi at gefa Þórr eða Óðni eða öðrum ásum minni at veizlum. En þat falli niðr, er áðr hefir verit. En ek heit þér því í mót, at ek skal tala með þér á morgin ok styrkja þitt ærendi, því at margir ætla nú í mót at standa."

(And then in the night the blessed Bishop Martinus appeared to him and spoke with him. "This has been the custom in this country, to give to Þórr or to Óðinn or to the other Æsir a toast at feasts. But that is being abandoned, which earlier was [the case]. But I promise you this in return, that I shall speak with you in the morning and support your mission, because many now intend to oppose you.")

St. Martin does not appear in Snorri's version of the saga, and Snorri chose not to use Þórr's visit to King Óláfr in his own work, but he retained and expanded upon Oddr's account of Óðinn's nocturnal visit (Hkr I, 131–34). One is left with the impression that Snorri did not consult Sulpicius' *Vita Martini* himself but only modified the text of Oddr. This is certainly in keeping with what we know about both men. Oddr's clerical vocation makes him far more likely to be familiar with Sulpicius' *Vita* than Snorri would have been.

TALES OF CHARLEMAGNE: NOTKER'S *DE CAROLO MAGNO* AND THE *PSEUDO-TURPIN CHRONICLE*

Scandinavians admired the greatness of the emperor Charlemagne at least as early as the eleventh century (Lönnroth 1975, 30). King Magnús Ólafsson was supposedly named by the skald Sigvatr after "Karla-Magnús" (Charlemagne) "for I know him to be the greatest man in the world" ("Pann vissa ek mann beztan í heimi" [Hkr II, 209–211]). The story connected with Magnús' name could have been invented by Snorri (Foote 1959a, 48), but Charlemagne had been a very popular literary figure on the Continent since his death, and literary accounts of his life such as the anonymous *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* continued to be written in the twelfth century. The high regard in which Charlemagne was held in the centuries after his death culminated in his canonization in 1165 by the Anti-Pope Paschal III (*Lex. d. MAs* 5, 964; Foote 1959a, 2; Smyser 1937, 5). Literature about Charlemagne was also known to the Scandinavian writers of kings' sagas in the twelfth and

thirteenth centuries. Some version of Einhard's *Vita Karoli* was used by the Norwegian synoptic historian Theodoricus (see Chapter 2). An anecdote about Charlemagne was incorporated into *Ágrip's* account of Haraldr hárfagri (Foote 1959a, 48), and a story about St. Óláfr, "Rauðs þátrr," found in the *Greatest saga of St. Óláfr* is derived from *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* (Joan Turville-Petre 1947, 7–10; see Chapter 4). Several scholars regard *Karlamagnús saga*, which was written in the middle of the thirteenth century, as a compilation of literary materials about Charlemagne which already existed in Iceland (Foote 1959a, 1–34; Kramarz-Bein 1996, 208–09; Aebischer 1957). At least parts of two such works, the anonymous *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* and *De Carolo Magno* by Notker Balbulus, monk of St. Gall, were used by Oddr when he wrote his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason at the end of the twelfth century.

The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle

The *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* (*PT*) was first written in France in the middle of the twelfth century, perhaps as early as 1140, by an anonymous author who claimed to be Bishop Turpin of Rheims, a contemporary of Charlemagne (Smyser 1937, 1; Foote 1959a, 2). The text describes a legendary campaign by Charlemagne after he is summoned by St. James to liberate his resting place in Compostella, Spain, from the Saracens. After a long campaign and much fighting, Charlemagne conquers Spain and Galicia. The *PT* became enormously popular in the latter half of the twelfth century, especially after Charlemagne's canonization in 1165, and it was known in Iceland fairly early. A translation of chapters 1–18 is found at the beginning of the "Saga of Agulando," a shorter text which was incorporated in the later *Karlamagnús saga*. An Icelandic translation of the *PT* had been completed by 1230 at the latest, but it might well have been completed sometime between the years 1190 and 1220 (Kramarz-Bein 1996, 206; Togeby 1975, 187–89). The date of the Icelandic translation is not crucial to the present study since Icelandic clerics could have availed themselves of the Latin version. But the fact that the *PT* was translated at such an early date testifies to its popularity in Iceland around the year 1200.

Some scholars have detected echoes of the *PT* in Oddr's saga of Óláfr Tryggvason (Lönnroth 1963, 85–88; Togeby 1975, 184). For example, the passage in *PT* in which Charlemagne is first summoned by St. James bears a striking resemblance to a passage in Oddr's saga in which Óláfr is commanded to travel to Greece (*PT* 1–2):

"Quid agis fili mi?" At ille inquit: "Quis es domine?" "Ego sum," inquit, "Iacobus apostolus Christi alumpnus, filius Zebedei, frater Iohannes evangeliste . . . ab his horis usque ad Galleciam iturus es: et post te omnes populi a mari usque ad mare, peregrinantes veniam delictorum suorum a Domino impetrantes illuc ituri sunt: narrantes laudes Domini et virtutes eius, et mirabilia eius que fecit . . . quia ego ero auxiliator tuus in omnibus, et propter labores tuos impetrabo tibi coronam a Domino in celestibus, et usque ad novissimum diem erit nomen tuum in laude."

("What are you doing, my son?" And he said, "Is it you, Lord?" "I am," he said, "James, the apostle of Christ, the son of Zebedee, the brother of John the Evangelist . . . After this point in time you are going to travel to Spain. And after you, all of the population from one sea all the way to the other sea will have gone there, pilgrims obtaining forgiveness for their sins. [They will be] telling the praises of the Lord, and his virtues, and his miracles which he performed . . . because I will be your guardian in all things. And on account of your labors, I will obtain for you a crown from the Lord in heaven, and your name will [be held] in praise until the last day.")

Compare the Latin account with the text of Oddr's saga (*Oddr* 40):

"Heyr þú efni góðs manns" . . . Ok er hann hafði heyrt þessa hluti, þá hræddisk hann ákafliga ok mælti svá: "Hverr ert þú dróttin, at ek trúa á?" Raddin svarar: "Far þú til Girklands ok man þér þar kunnigt gert nafns dróttins guðs þíns. Ok ef þú varðveitir hans boðorð, þá mant þú hafa ælft líf ok sælu."

("Listen, you who have the potential to become a good man" . . . And when he heard this, then he became very much afraid, and said this: "Are you the Lord, in whom I believe?" The voice answered: "Travel to Greece, and there the name of your Lord God will be made known to you. And if you do his command, then you will have eternal life and salvation.")

The exact version of the *PT* which was known in Iceland can be deduced by close textual analyses of the surviving Icelandic translations. Adalbert Hämel and Peter Foote both trace the Icelandic redactions of *PT* to a parent manuscript which they designate as "L" or the "Libellus" redaction of the *PT*. This redaction is in turn derived from the *Codex Calixtinus*, an extant version of the *PT* which in the twelfth century was located at the shrine of Santiago de Compostella (Smyser 1937, 1; Foote 1959b, 137–142). This

was a major pilgrimage site in the Middle Ages and the Icelander Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson made a pilgrimage there in 1195–96 (*Bsk* I, 641–43; Bogi Melsted 1912–14, 808; see Chapter 1). It is tempting to speculate that Hrafn may have acquired a copy of the *PT* while he was there and brought a copy of the Latin “Libellus” version of the *PT* to Iceland when he returned from his pilgrimage. If so *PT* would have arrived in Iceland in 1196. Unfortunately, this evidence is purely circumstantial, but such a scenario would be in keeping with what we know about the transmission of literary works from the Continent to Iceland in the twelfth century.

Notker of St. Gall's *De Carolo Magno*

Notker Balbulus monk of St. Gall, was born ca. 840 and died on April 6, 912 (*Lex. d. MAs* 6, 1289). During his life he wrote many hymns as well as secular and religious prose works. Perhaps the best known and most widely disseminated of his works in the Middle Ages was a prose account of the deeds of Charlemagne, composed ca. 883–87 at St. Gall. Notker wrote many years after Charlemagne's death, and the anecdotes contained in this work are more legendary than factual. He apparently did not give a title to his work, and modern scholars refer to it as either *De Carolo Magno* (Jaffé 628) or *Gesta Karoli Magni* (*Lex. d. MAs* 6, 1290). The latter title agrees with that given to the work in one of the extant manuscripts (MS Hannover XIII, 858: Jaffé 630; Thorpe 1969, 179, n.74). MS Hannover XIII, 858 contains both Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni* and Notker's *De Carolo*. It and other extant manuscripts show that these two works were typically circulated together and often compiled as a single textual unit (*Lex. d. MAs* 6, 1290).

The best known and most dramatic episode in *De Carolo* (Thorpe 1969, 36) is Notker's description of the Langobard king, Desiderius, and the outlaw Otter as they watch the approach of Charlemagne's army outside of Pavia from a tower within the city (*De Carolo* 691–92; see Note 3). In successive waves, first the baggage trains, then the army, then the king's escort come into view. The sight of each of the components of Charlemagne's army is so impressive that Desiderius repeatedly and mistakenly insists that the emperor must be present there, only to be corrected by Otter each time. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (*Hkr* I, cxxx), Alexander Bugge (1910, 33–4), and Lars Lönnroth (1975, 43–4) have all noticed the similarity between this episode in Notker's work and the Norse accounts of the Danish king Sveinn, the Swedish king Óláfr, and the Norwegian jarl Eiríkr anxiously watching the approach of Óláfr Tryggvason's fleet just prior to the battle of Svöldr. As in Notker's version, the drama escalates as the allies repeatedly and mistakenly identify the ever more beautiful Norwegian ships as Óláfr's own ship, the Long Serpent.

The description is found in Oddr's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* (Oddr 198–205) and is repeated nearly verbatim in *Fagrskinna* (*Fsk* 148–151) and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* I, 353–355).

There are three possible explanations for how Notker's account of Charlemagne and Desiderius came to be used as a source by Oddr in his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason. The first possibility is that a written text of Notker's *De Carolo Magno* found its way to Iceland from the upper Rhine. A second, closely related scenario would be that Scandinavian travelers, perhaps pilgrims traveling through the upper Rhine region, either read or heard a version of Notker's work and that the story traveled to Iceland in oral form. A third possibility would be that Notker's original account of Charlemagne outside of Pavia was adopted by another, no longer extant, later work outlining the life of Charlemagne, and that it was this work which was brought to Iceland as part of the large corpus of literature about the emperor, some of which eventually found its way into *Karlamagnús saga*. That would account for the migration of Notker's dramatic account to Iceland without requiring that the entire text of Notker's *De Carolo Magno* be present in an Icelandic library.

With regard to the first two possibilities, it must be stated that scholarship has neglected the importance of the Rhine region for intellectual and literary developments in Scandinavia. There was a substantial number of Scandinavian, particularly Norwegian, merchants on the Rhine at least as far south as Cologne in the twelfth century (Bächtold 1910, 264–66). In light of this fact, Peter Foote has challenged the traditional interpretation of the passage in *Íslendingabók* indicating where Sæmundr Sigfússon acquired his education: “In those days Sæmundr Sigfússon came from the south to this country from France and then was consecrated a priest” (“Á þeim dögum kom Sæmundr Sigfússon sunnan af Frakklandi hingat til lands ok lét síðan vígjask til prests” [*Ísl* 20–21]). Foote emphasizes the importance of the Rhine area to Scandinavia in the twelfth century, and maintains that the term “Frakkland” does not refer to France, but rather to the land associated with the Franks: both banks of the Rhine (Foote 1975, 71).

The possibility that a written version of Notker's work traveled from this region to Scandinavia has literary parallels within the corpus of medieval Scandinavian literature. Several scholars have argued for a German origin for the Norse *Piðreks saga*, written down ca. 1250 in Norway (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 346), but perhaps composed much earlier, probably in Germany (Andersson 1986, 354–57). In addition to the identification of the story as “German” (“þýðversk” [*ÞS* I, 3]) in the prologue to the saga, scholars point to the importance of the Rhine region, especially the areas around Cologne, Aachen, Mainz and Worms, as the location for many of the events described in this

saga (Wisniewski 1986, 91). Some scholars have detected possible literary influences on the saga from the extreme upper Rhine region even further south (Reichert 1994, 512; 1996, 241–42).

Theodore M. Andersson makes the case for a literary trope common to texts which are thought to have originated in the Rhineland, namely, the rhetorical device whereby an author anticipates criticism on the part of an unbelieving audience. The twelfth-century German *Herzog Ernst B*, composed ca. 1170 (*Herz* 404), begins with the author reproaching those who merely remain at home and farm, without attempting any heroic actions of their own, yet refuse to believe the extraordinary deeds wrought by others (“*genuogen ist von herzen leit / die dâ heime ir lant bûwent / unde nimmer des getrûwent / swaz man von heldes noeten saget. / die sint an wirdekeit verza- get*” [*Herz* 8–12]). An expanded version of precisely this sentiment is repeated in the prologue to *Piðreks saga* (*ÞSI*, 6–7), and a very similar rhetorical device is also employed by Oddr in his *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* (Andersson 1986, 360–62; *Oddr* 2):

en ef menn verða til at lasta, en eigi um at bæta, ok kunna engir sön-
nurnar á sitt mál at fœra, at annat sé rettari, þá þykkir oss lítils vert þeira
tillög ok ómerkilig, því at vitrum mönnum þykkir hver saga heimsliga
ónýt, ef hann kallar þat lygi, er sagt er, en hann má engar sönnur á finna.

(But if people come forward to criticize but not to improve [the account], and they are not able to add any evidence for their view so that it might be more correct, then their contributions seem to be of little value and unimportant to us. Because each claim seems foolish and useless to wise men if a man calls that which is told a lie, but he is not able to bring forward any proof.)

We know that there was a great deal of literary activity in the twelfth century in the Rhineland, but these observations point to a further transmission of these literary materials to Scandinavia and to Iceland. The idea that a written version of Notker's *De Carolo Magno* could have been brought to the North is at least plausible.

The possibility of Scandinavian travelers hearing or reading Notker's work has much to recommend it as well. *Leiðarvísir og borgaskipun* is the title of the travel diary of the Icelandic monk, Nikulas of Munkaþverá, written between 1155 and 1160, which describes a pilgrimage to Rome in 1154. Nikulas describes two pilgrim routes up the Rhine and into Switzerland via either Cologne or Mainz to Basel. The proximity of Basel to the Benedictine monasteries of St. Gall and Reichenau is close, and there is evidence to the

effect that a large number of Scandinavians visited Reichenau. The Reichenau monastery's register of names lists no fewer than 670 Scandinavian visitors to the monastery from the eleventh to the second half of the twelfth century (Finnur Jónsson & Jørgensen 1923, 6). In addition, one of the leaves of a manuscript of Priscian from the library at Reichenau, Fol. 165 of Karlsruhe MS Aug. 163, bears a runic note on the back side indicating a price (“: con-stitit : argenti : III : id est [tre]s”), probably the price paid for the manuscript. The runic characters are distinctly Scandinavian, as opposed to Anglo-Saxon, and can be dated to some time after the middle of the eleventh century. Since the same manuscript has a later Latin inscription from the fourteenth or fifteenth century referring to Lake Constance (“*Iste liber est Sifridi dictis Bruschecc[lesiae] Constanz*”), the manuscript almost certainly traveled from the North to the South, probably by means of a Scandinavian pilgrim in the eleventh or twelfth century (Längin 1925, 701–2; Derolez 1968, 15).

The documented presence of so many Scandinavians in what is now eastern Switzerland in the twelfth century makes it very plausible that copies of Notker's text, originally written at St. Gall, but probably also available at Reichenau, could have been read or a copy of it acquired by a visiting Scandinavian pilgrim. Unfortunately, no catalogue of the Reichenau monastic library from the eleventh or twelfth centuries survives, but there was a long tradition of literary contact between St. Gall and Reichenau going back to the tenth and eleventh centuries. Both monasteries were Benedictine and belonged to the same diocese, and in the ninth century the monk Grimalt, who had been a teacher at Reichenau, became abbot of St. Gall and helped expand the St. Gall school and library by bringing books there from Reichenau (Hartig 1925, 639). The *Vita Sancti Wiborodae* and Ekkehart's *Casus Sancti Galli* both mention that the contents of St. Gall's library were moved to Reichenau for safekeeping during the Hungarian invasion in 926 after the hermit Wiborada had warned the abbot of the impending danger (Christ 1984, 179). A letter written in the eleventh century by Notker Labeo, monk of St. Gall, to Bishop Hugo of Sitten is still extant. In this letter Notker refers to several classical works in the St. Gall library which he offers to have copied if the bishop would cover the expense of doing so. Notker goes on to say that the abbot of Reichenau had requested several volumes which the bishop had previously lent to St. Gall, specifically a copy of Cicero's *Philippica* and a commentary on his *Topica*, but Notker would not lend them until he received copies of Cicero's *Rhetorica* and Victorinus' *Commentary* from Reichenau as security (Grimm 1871, 189–92; Christ 1984, 179).

The letter of Notker Labeo to Bishop Hugo indicates that there were frequent and regular exchanges of books between the two monasteries at least

into the eleventh century. It would be surprising if there were not a copy, or copies, of a work as popular as Notker's *De Carolo Magno* in the Reichenau library. It could also be that Scandinavian pilgrims visited St. Gall itself. Interest in Scandinavian culture on the part of the monks of St. Gall is borne out by the existence of the "St. Gallener ABCdarium Normannicum." This manuscript, which was written in Scandinavian runic characters in the twelfth century, testifies to a knowledge of Scandinavian runic writing by at least some of the monks of St. Gall (Reichert 1996, 245).

Though there seems to have been a steady stream of Scandinavian pilgrims traveling through northeastern Switzerland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there is no reference to Notker's *De Carolo* in the extant catalogues of the contents of Icelandic libraries compiled in the later Middle Ages (Olmer 1902). Therefore, it is most likely that the account of Charlemagne and Desiderius came to Iceland in an oral form, or that a version of Notker's original account was brought to Iceland as part of another no longer extant work outlining the deeds of Charlemagne. That possibility was suggested by Lars Lönnroth, who maintains that the passage in question was once part of a now lost text which he and Paul Aebischer refer to as the **Vie romancée de Charlemagne* (Aebischer 1957, 166; Lönnroth 1975, 43–44).

It is most likely that Oddr knew Notker's account of Charlemagne and Desiderius in an indirect, perhaps oral form, because there is no reference to Notker or to *De Carolo Magno* in any of the later medieval catalogues of Iceland's monastic libraries, and no other sagas appear to have been influenced by Notker's work. Nevertheless, some version of a story relating the dramatic high point of Notker's work, probably told in connection with the deeds of Charlemagne, must have come to Oddr's attention. It is quite possible that neither Oddr nor his informant connected what they regarded as a good story with the name of the original author. However, it is also possible that Notker's account traveled to Scandinavia in a written form, perhaps incorporated into the no longer extant work reconstructed by Aebischer (Aebischer 1957, 166–7), but this cannot be proven. Both possibilities are worth mentioning, because they both accord with what we know about the accumulation of literary motifs and materials surrounding the semi-legendary emperor Charlemagne in the second half of twelfth-century Iceland.

If Oddr's account of Óláfr being summoned to travel to Greece is ultimately derived from the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, the consequences are more tangible. The version of the *PT* used by the Icelandic translator can be traced to the *Codex Calixtinus* which was connected with the pilgrimage site in Compostella, Spain. The fact that the Iclander Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson is known to have made a pilgrimage to this very site in 1195–6 makes it very

tempting to connect this journey with the importation of the *PT* into Iceland at the end of the twelfth century. Unfortunately, it is fairly certain that Oddr wrote his *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* toward the beginning of that decade, most likely shortly after the return of his abbot Karl Jónsson from Norway in 1189 (see Chapter 1). Oddr almost certainly wrote his saga before Gunnlaugr Leifsson (d. 1218–19) wrote his. It is perhaps most accurate to regard Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson as being only one of a large number of Icelandic pilgrims to Compostella, any one of whom might have been charged by a local clergyman with procuring a copy of *PT*. Hrafn was simply the only such pilgrim to be of sufficient social prominence to have his visit remembered by the later authors of the bishops' sagas. Nevertheless, his pilgrimage and the presence of the *PT* in Iceland both give evidence of one frequently traveled route for Icelanders to and from the Continent.

VITA HARALDI

Óláfr Tryggvason's body was never found after the battle of Svöldr. Most accounts of the battle report that he perished when he leapt overboard from the stern of the "Long Serpent," wounded and dressed in full armour. However, there quickly arose another tradition, namely, that Óláfr Tryggvason had not been killed in this battle, but had survived and traveled to the East, where he became a monk. This tradition is at least as old as the contemporary poetry of Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld who refers to it in stanzas 22 and 24 of his *Erfdrápa* (*Hkr* I, 368–70; *Skj* IA, 164–5):

22. Samr vas órr, of ævi,
oddbraks, hinns þat sagði,
at lofða gramr lifði,
læstyggss sonar Tryggva.
Vesa kveðr qld ór éli
Óleif kominn stála,
menn geta máli sönnu,
mjök es verr an svá, ferri.

(It was a decent sender of the point-crash who said that about the life of the trustworthy son of Tryggvi, that the king of the people was alive; men say that Óláfr has escaped from the shower of steels, it is much worse than that, men's guesses fall far from the truth.)

24. Enn segir auðar kenni
austr í malma gnaustan
seggr frá sörum tyggja

sumr eða brott of kumnum.
 Nú es sannfregit sunnan
 siklings ór styr miklum,
 kannka mart við manna,
 morð, veifanar orði.

(Yet a certain man tells the knower of wealth about the wounded king in the din of iron in the east or that he escaped; now the king's death has been confirmed from the south from the great battle, I do not care for the rumours of men.)

Hallfródr's stanzas are an early reference to a tradition which became very widespread, and the possibility that Óláfr Tryggvason survived the battle of Svöldr is mentioned by Theodoricus ("quidam dicunt regem scapha evasisse et ob salutem animæ suæ exteras regiones adisse" [MHN 24]); the author of the *Historia Norwegiæ* ("quidam etiam longo intervallo in quodam coenobio se illum vidisse protestati sunt" [MHN 119]); and the author of *Agrip* ("Sumir menn geta hann á báti braut hafa komizk, ok segja at hann hafi verit sénn síðan í munklífi nokkvuru á Jórsalalandi" [Agrip 34]). The tradition was also known to the author of *Fagrskinna* (Fsk 160–62) and Snorri (Hkr I, 367–68), and the story of Óláfr's escape was told in detail in the sagas by Gunnlaugr and Oddr.

A similar tradition arose concerning the fate of King Harold Godwinson, who was killed at the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The belief that Harold survived this battle is referred to by Gerald of Wales (GW VI, 140), Ethelred of Rievaulx, and Gervase of Tilbury, among others (Freeman 1873 III, 512–14). An extensive account of Harold's later life is found in the anonymous *Vita Haraldi*. This work survives in one manuscript only (British Library MS Harley 3776, folios 1–24), and it is the first item in a manuscript collection of texts from Waltham Abbey. The extant text is dated to ca. 1205 or 1215 (Lönnroth 1963, 79), but the tradition of Harold's survival is much older, and the *Vita Haraldi* author made use of earlier documents, some of which might have been so old as to be nearly contemporary with the events they report (Swanton 1984, xxvi). According to the *Vita Haraldi*, Harold supposedly survived the battle, was nursed back to health, and spent the rest of his life as a pious hermit. Textual correspondences between the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason and the Latin *Vita Haraldi* are close enough to allow us to conclude that both Oddr and Gunnlaugr used the latter as a source to augment existing traditions surrounding the life of Óláfr Tryggvason after his escape from the battle at Svöldr (Lönnroth 1963, 79–81).

Vita Haraldi and Oddr Snorrason's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*

It is clear that the *Vita Haraldi's* description of Harold's escape from the battlefield at Hastings provided the model for Oddr's later description of Óláfr Tryggvason's rumoured escape after the Battle of Svöldr. In his *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, Oddr digresses and gives a description of Harold's escape after Hastings which closely corresponds to that found in the *Vita Haraldi* (Oddr 245–6; see Note 4). He uses almost the exact same wording in his descriptions of both Harold's and Óláfr's physical wounds ("var særðr mǫrgum sárum ok engum stórum" [Oddr 241]; "ok mǫrg hafði hann sár, ok engi mjök stór" [Oddr 245]). Other features of the *Vita Haraldi's* description of Harold's escape are present in Oddr's account of Óláfr as well: two people not involved in the fighting bring Óláfr away from the place of battle (VH 34), both kings realize that it is God's will that they are deprived of their kingdom, and both refuse to attempt to retake the throne (Oddr 241; VH 38–9). Harold realizes he is being punished for the false oath he had sworn to William (VH 50), and Óláfr knows that he must atone for the sins of his youth, apparently those he had committed as a viking (Oddr 241). Both kings undertake pilgrimages to expiate their sins, and both end their lives as monks (Oddr 241–3; VH 78). The *U* fragment of Oddr's saga contains the additional correspondence that Óláfr was kept in hiding for a period of two years while he recovered from his wounds (Oddr 259; Lönnroth 1963, 77–80).

Vita Haraldi and Gunnlaugr Leifsson's *Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason

Gunnlaugr probably wrote his saga of Óláfr Tryggvason shortly after Oddr wrote his. Both monks made use of the *Vita Haraldi*, though in different ways. While Oddr seems to have been primarily interested in supplying the details surrounding Óláfr's escape from the battle as a conclusion to his saga, Gunnlaugr must have enjoyed the anecdotes about the king's later life. The text of Gunnlaugr's saga only survives in passages incorporated in the fourteenth-century *Greatest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason*, but in a lengthy passage identified as having originally been part of Gunnlaugr's saga (Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 96), a Norwegian pilgrim to the Holy Land named Gautr finds the now very old Óláfr Tryggvason living as a monk. After responding to the man's questions about who was then king in Norway, Gautr believes he has recognized the monk and asks about his identity. The man gives an evasive answer (*Flat* I, 505):

Gautr mælti svá: "Seg mér ef þú ert Óláfr konungr."

"Eigi eigna ek mér veg né konungs nafn."

(Gautr spoke as follows: "Tell me if you are King Óláfr.")

"I do not claim to possess the honor or the name of king.")

This recalls a passage in the *Vita Haraldi*, where the now very old Harold Godwinson admits to a traveler that he had been present at the Battle of Hastings, but gives an evasive answer when asked if he might be King Harold himself (VH 78):

"Quando apud Hastings dimicatum est: nullus Haroldo me carior habebatur."

"When [the battle] was fought near Hastings there was nobody dearer to Harold than myself."

Though it is extant today in only one manuscript, the *Vita Haraldi* must at one time have been more popular and enjoyed a wider circulation than the current state of preserved manuscripts indicates. The fact that both Oddr and Gunnlaugr availed themselves of different parts of the *Vita Haraldi* suggests that there was a written manuscript of the work in the Þingeyrar monastery's library at the end of the twelfth century, and that it was at the disposal of both monks. The incorporation of different parts of the *Vita Haraldi* into the two sagas by Gunnlaugr and Oddr demonstrates that Gunnlaugr did not merely expand upon Oddr's work, but reworked his sources in his own way.

SUMMARY

Oddr's use of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, and the *Vita Martini* of Sulpicius Severus shows that the primarily religious sources which were used by the earliest Icelandic writers of history were still available and being consulted by the early Icelandic writers of kings' sagas. However, the repertoire of historical materials which lay at the disposal of these writers had obviously expanded since the time of Ari Þorgilsson. More secular historical materials such as the *Vita Haraldi*, the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, and possibly some version of Notker's *De Carolo Magno* were now to be found in Iceland as well. Many motifs contained within the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason ultimately stem from traditions associated with Charlemagne. Perhaps this should be expected. It would be logical for Icelandic writers of kings' sagas to borrow a number of motifs associated

with an indisputably great historical king in order to emphasize the greatness of their own hero. Theodoricus' knowledge of the *Vita Karoli* testifies to an active interest in the person of Charlemagne in late twelfth-century Norway, and the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* does the same for Iceland. The dissemination of material pertaining to Charlemagne was almost certainly bound up with Charlemagne's canonization in 1165 (Smyser 1937, 5–6; Lönnroth 1975). While this explains the presence of so much of this type of literary material in Scandinavia and Iceland in the late twelfth century, it also indicates that Iceland was by no means excluded from the mainstream of European literary and intellectual trends. The presence of the motifs originally associated with Charlemagne in the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason testifies to a distinctly twelfth-century literary milieu, and one which was not too far removed from literary tastes in Britain and on the Continent.

Chapter Four

Óláfs Saga and the Hagiographic Tradition

Although he was not Norway's first Christian king, Óláfr Haraldsson is credited with the conversion of pagan Norway to Christianity, and he was declared a saint soon after his death. Therefore many of the literary motifs that later saga writers used in depicting the events of Óláfr's life are distinctly Christian. Many anecdotes told about Óláfr recall episodes in Continental European hagiographic texts, and the presence of these motifs sets the various versions of Óláfr's saga apart from the other kings' sagas. Supernatural phenomena and instances of divine intervention can be found in many kings' sagas, but Óláfr's sanctification and his status as the patron saint of Norway resulted in an extraordinarily large number of miraculous occurrences in the accounts of his life. This is especially true of the *Legendary saga*. Hagiography is a genre very different from the native literary traditions of Scandinavia, and almost by definition, the writings which the various authors of Óláfr's sagas used as models for portraying the life of a saint were bound to originate in Christian Western Europe. Snorri's "Óláfs saga helga" has been called the "Historical saga" because Snorri reduced the number of miraculous events and obviously tried to give a relatively realistic portrayal of the life of the king, Óláfr Haraldsson, who later became a saint (*KL* 12, 549). But even Snorri's portrayal of Óláfr's life includes five miracles, and fifteen posthumous miracles are attributed to him in the later sagas of *Heimskringla* (Whaley 1985, 1084–5).

Not all the hagiographic material contained in the sagas of St. Óláfr can be discussed in this study. Some of the episodes in the sagas of Óláfr are obviously based on events related in the New Testament and they simply represent common knowledge. For example, Óláfr Haraldsson frequently cures

the sick, the crippled, and the blind. The motif is ubiquitous in medieval literature, and virtually identical incidents are related in many different medieval texts and do not constitute possible literary borrowings. Nevertheless, the authors of Óláfr's sagas demonstrably made use of identifiable foreign literary materials, both religious and secular.

VITA LEONI

An episode with clear hagiographic overtones is an incident related in the *Legendary saga* and also by Snorri in "Óláfs saga helga" in which Óláfr converts the inhabitants of Gudbrandsdalen in Oppland in Norway (*LS* 83–93; *Hkr* II, 183–190). When Óláfr first comes there to proselytize, the farmers are hostile to Óláfr's new religion. At an assembly called to debate the matter the farmers bring out a decorated wooden statue of Þórr and use it to taunt Óláfr and the power of his invisible God. Óláfr secretly instructs one of his companions, Kolbeinn sterki, to strike the statue with a club when Óláfr tells him to. At the exact moment when the sun becomes visible at sunrise, Óláfr gives the signal; Kolbeinn does as he is told, and the statue of Þórr falls to pieces, leaving nothing but the mice, serpents, and toads which formerly lived within the hollow image. The frightened farmers are then easily converted and baptized the same day. The Icelandic account closely parallels several incidents in European hagiographic literature, and there are a host of similar episodes upon which the author of Óláfs saga could have based his account (Brewer 1884, 177–180). However, one incident in particular from the Life of St. Leo, archbishop of Rouen (born ca. 856), is especially close. Leo's *Vita* reports that when Leo was preaching the faith in the city of Bayonne, the pagan townspeople were afraid of offending their patron god, and the *Vita* gives the following account (*Acta Sanctorum* no. 7, 95):

"Quid facimus? En novorum dæmoniorum annuntiator est iste, manifestus sacrorum violator, aut provinciæ explorator." Ad hæc præfati viri piratæ deorum suorum culturam timentes evacuari, in Sanctum Leonem juxta Nivi fluvium populo prædicantem irruunt, et ipsum in templum Martis, quod erat in medio civitatis introducunt, et sacrificare eidem cogunt. Sed Beatus Leo elevatis in cælum oculis ac manibus, flexis genibus, sic ait: "Omnes dii gentium dæmonia; Dominus autem cœlos fecit." Et sufflavit in faciem statuæ æreæ Martis; quæ statim ad terram corruit, et in cinerem redigitur. Qui actum tam mirificum videntes sacerdotes templi in Jesum Christum crediderunt; et baptizati sunt illo die omnes templi sacerdotes.

("What are we to do? Behold, this man is a herald of new demons, and a clear violator of the gods, or [he is] an investigator of the province." In addition to these things, the aforementioned men of piracy feared that the cultivation of their own gods would be made ineffective, and they rushed upon St. Leo, who was preaching to the population next to the river Nives. And they brought him into the temple of Mars, which was in the middle of the city, and they intended to sacrifice to that same god. But St. Leo, with his eyes and hands raised up to heaven, and upon bent knees, said this: "All the gods of the heathens are demons. The Lord, however, created heaven." And he blew into the face of the bronze statue of Mars, which immediately fell to the ground, and was reduced to ashes. When the priests of the temple saw what a miraculous thing had been done, they believed in Jesus Christ, and all the priests of the temple were baptized that same day.)

This incident from the Life of St. Leo is very close to the later Icelandic account. There are the common elements of initial public hostility to the new faith, the preacher of this faith proving God's power over the favorite local deity by physically destroying its image, and the converts being baptized on the same day. These might be hagiographic commonplaces, but in both accounts the old faith centers on an idol which is also the god of war. One difference is that the bronze image of Mars was transformed into ashes in the Latin account while the wooden image collapsed and revealed vermin in the Norse version, but such an alteration may be ascribed to Norse folklore tradition and the author's wish to incorporate folklore motifs familiar to a medieval Scandinavian audience. Stories of deceptive images suddenly deteriorating into revolting animals are common in Scandinavian literary tradition, and a very similar event occurs in another king's saga, in the Snæfríðr episode in the saga of Haraldr hárfagri (*Hkr* I, 125–7; *Ágrip* 5–7).

As closely as the incident related in the life of St. Leo might parallel the episode told in two sagas of St. Óláfr, the story is far from unique in the Latin hagiographic tradition, and it is impossible to state with certainty whether it was this particular *Vita* that inspired the original author of Óláfr's saga. It is clear, however, that the saints' lives were a popular literary genre in Iceland, as documented by the titles of works recorded in catalogues of late medieval Icelandic libraries (Olmer 1902, 3–54). It is possible, therefore, that either this particular *Vita*, or a similar episode in another hagiographic source, influenced and inspired the unknown author of the original version of Óláfr's saga, which was later used as a source by Snorri and by the author of the *Legendary saga*.

ADAM OF BREMEN'S *GESTA HAMMABURGENSIS ECCLESIAE PONTIFICUM*

The popularity of Adam of Bremen's ecclesiastical history in medieval Scandinavia, and the likelihood of Icelandic authors drawing upon his work, has been discussed above (see Chapters 2 and 3). Two incidents reported in the sagas of Óláfr Haraldsson demonstrate that Adam's history not only existed in Iceland, but that it was popular and was consulted on numerous occasions by the different authors of the sagas of Óláfr Haraldsson.

Gustav Storm first noticed that there were borrowings from Adam in the *Legendary saga*. The first borrowing is found in that saga's account of the descendants of Óláfr the Swede (Storm 1875, 14; Sigurður Nordal 1914, 62). Adam of Bremen writes (*AB* 67–8):

Olaph rex Sueonum christianissimus erat filiamque Sclavorum Estred nomine de Obodritis accepit uxorem, ex qua genitus est filius Iacobus et filia Ingrad, quam rex sanctus Gerzlef de Ruzzia duxit in coniugium.

(Óláfr was the most christian king of the Swedes, and he took a daughter of the Slavs with the name Ástríðr as his wife from among the Obodrites. To her was born a son Jacob and a daughter Ingigerðr, whom the holy king Jaroslav of Russia married.)

This account is repeated nearly verbatim in the *Legendary saga* (*LS* 104):

Óláfr inn svenski átta ok konu, þá er Ástrið hét. Hon var vindversk. Þeira sonr var Qnundr, er qðrum nafni hét Jákob, ok þeira dóttir var Ingigierðr, er Óláfi konungi var fest ok Jarizleifr konungr fekk síðan í Gqðum austr.

(Óláfr the Swede also married a woman, who was called Ástríðr. She was Wendish. Their son was Qnundr, who was also known by the name of Jacob, and their daughter was Ingigerðr, who was engaged to Óláfr, but whom King Jaroslav later married east in Russia.)

Storm believed that a second borrowing from Adam of Bremen in the *Legendary saga*, Óláfr's dream before the battle of Stiklastaðir, was derived from Adam by way of a now lost section of the *Historia Norwegiæ* (Storm 1893, 11). Storm's identification of Adam as the source for this genealogy has generally been accepted by later scholars, though most disagree with his hypothesis concerning the existence of a now lost section of the *Historia*

Norwegiæ (Sigurður Nordal 1914, 62–3; Johnsen 1922, xxv; Moberg 1940–42, 549). But while the account found in the *Legendary saga* is close to that of Adam (*LS* 184–6), Snorri's later redaction is even closer. His account in "Óláfs saga helga" contains a direct correspondence to Adam's history in Óláfr's exclamation to Finnur Árnason when he is awakened. According to Adam, Óláfr said to Finnur, "Oh, what have you done?" ("O, quid fecisti?" [*AB* 81]). In Snorri's account the king asks "Why did you wake me, Finnur?" ("Hví vakðir þú mik, Finnur?" [*Hkr* II, 368; see Note 1]). This correspondence is not found in the *Legendary saga*.

There is a consensus among scholars that the *Legendary saga's* account of Óláfr's dream is ultimately derived from Adam of Bremen's ecclesiastical history, but the fact that Snorri's later account of this scene parallels Adam's account even more closely requires some explanation. The presence of the dream episode in both sagas is most likely due to the fact that it was originally included in either the "Oldest saga" or the *Middle saga (Sigurður Nordal 1914, 63). The omission of Óláfr's question to Finnur in the *Legendary saga* could be counted as one of the many instances where the author abbreviated material found in the "Oldest saga" (Jónas Kristjánsson 1976, 287). However, since the episode is not present in any of the surviving fragments of the "Oldest saga," this is impossible to ascertain with certainty. Another possible, though less likely, explanation might be that both authors had access to Adam's history, and that they consulted it independently. We have established that Adam's history existed in Iceland at least since the time of Ari (see Chapter 2), and it could have been consulted any number of times by various authors of kings' sagas. The multiple borrowings from Adam's work in the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason (see Chapter 3) and Óláfr Haraldsson indicate that it was a popular reference work in Iceland. As we will see below, this is what I propose for another foreign source consulted by Icelandic authors of kings' sagas, namely, William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*.

WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY'S *GESTA REGUM ANGLORUM*

The *Gesta regum Anglorum* by William of Malmesbury was completed by William some time just prior to 1143. It immediately became very influential among Anglo-Norman historians and was widely disseminated in Britain and on the Continent (Stubbs 1887, xxvii, xci). Some form of William's history was certainly known to the Norwegian historian Theodoricus (see Chapter 2), and it is not unlikely that a copy of William's history existed in Iceland around or prior to the year 1200.

Óláfr Haraldsson and William the Conqueror

Scholars have noticed a close correspondence between an incident related in William's history and in two versions of Óláfr's saga. In William of Malmesbury's account of William the Conqueror's arrival in England prior to the Battle of Hastings, the future conqueror supposedly fell while coming ashore. A nearby soldier in his army, however, transformed an apparently ill omen into a good one (*WM* 450):

In egressu naus pede lapsus, euentum in melius commutauit, acclamante sibi proximo milite: "Tenēs" inquit "Angliam, comes, rex futurus."

(While disembarking from his ship, he fell onto one foot, but the event was transformed into a more positive one, when one of his soldiers standing close to him exclaimed, "You hold," he said, "England, Duke, and you will be king.")

There is an undeniable similarity between William's depiction of this incident and two virtually identical accounts told about Óláfr Haraldsson's return to Norway in the *Legendary saga* (*LS* 66) and in "Óláfs saga helga." The *Heimskringla* account reads as follows (*Hkr* II, 36):

Þá gengu þeir upp á cýna. Stígr konungr þarðrum fœti, sem var leira nökkur, en studdisk þðrum fœti á kné. Þá mælti hann: "Fell ek nú," segir konungr. Þá segir Hrani: "Eigi felltu, konungr, nú festir þú fœtr í landi." Konungr hló við ok mælti: "Vera má svá, ef guð vill" (*Hsk* II, 36).

(Then they went onto the island. There the king slipped with one foot where there was a patch of mud, but steadied himself on the knee of his other leg. Then he said, "Now I fell." Then Hrani said: "You did not fall, king; you set firm foot on the land." The king laughed and said, "That may be, if God so will.")

This literary motif is an ancient one and very similar incidents are related by Valerius Maximus concerning Scipio Africanus, by Frontinus who tells the same anecdote concerning both Scipio Africanus and Caesar, and by Suetonius in his biography of Caesar when he lands in Africa prior to fighting Cato (Moberg 1940–42, 555–59). Klaus von See believes the incident was borrowed by Icelandic saga authors directly from William of Malmesbury rather than from any classical sources, and he cites the great popularity and wide distribution William's history as justification for this view (von See 1976, 2–5). Ove Moberg, however, points out that the anonymous French

Estoire de Seint Ædvard le Rei is closer to the wording of *Heimskringla* than is William of Malmesbury, and he speculates that a now lost legendary Life of Edward was a common source known to and used by William, the author of the "Oldest saga" and the author of *La Estoire* (Moberg 1940–42, 559–74). Von See rejects Moberg's suggestion and argues that other details of the incident indicate that the scene is most likely a literary borrowing from William. Unlike in *La Estoire*, in William's history and in the Norse versions of the incident, it is not the future king or conqueror himself who makes the comment, but a member of his entourage. Furthermore, in the classical sources and in *La Estoire*, the future conqueror falls and seizes the land with his hands, whereas William and the Norse accounts only mention the future king stumbling with his feet. Such correspondences between William of Malmesbury's account and Óláfr's sagas combine to make von See's view of Icelandic authors borrowing directly from William most likely (von See 1976, 3).

The Battle of Helgeå

Ove Moberg believed that Snorri's description of the events prior to the hostilities between Óláfr and Knútr and the battle at Helgeå ("Áin helga") was most likely derived from William's description of those events in his history (Moberg 1941, 222–23). Moberg reached that conclusion based on the close verbal correspondences between the two texts. William writes (*WM* 322; emphasis added):

[Cnuto] nec contenta **Danemarkia quam avito, et Anglia quam bellico iure** obtinebat, martem in Sweuos transtulit.

([Knútr] not content with Denmark, which he held by inheritance, and England which he possessed by right of war, carried war to the Swedes.)

Moberg detected a close textual correspondence between this passage in William's history and a corresponding passage concerning Óláfr Haraldsson in "Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar" where Snorri writes (*Hkr* III, 173; emphasis added):

En gamli Knútr **eignaðisk at erfð Dana-ríki, en með hernaði ok orrostu England.**

(And Knútr the old obtained Denmark as an inheritance, and England with war and battle.)

Moberg proceeds to make a case for William's *Gesta regum* having been available to other Icelandic saga authors as well, and he discusses potential borrowings from William in *Játvarðar saga* (Moberg 1941, 220–21).

Alfred the Great and Óláfr Haraldsson

In the darkest days of his reign, during the Danish invasions, King Alfred the Great was living the life of an exile on the Isle of Athelney. According to William of Malmesbury St. Cuthbert appeared to Alfred in a dream, assured him of God's and his own support, and exhorted Alfred to return to his kingdom (*WM* 182). A very similar event, which does not occur in the *Legendary saga*, is described in Snorri's "Óláfs saga helga." After having been driven from his kingdom by Knútr and his own subjects, Óláfr lives in exile with his kinsmen in Russia. One night while anxiously pondering his future, Óláfr falls asleep. Óláfr Tryggvason appears to him in a dream, and, like Cuthbert, exhorts the exiled king to be of courage and to return to his kingdom (*Hkr* II, 340–41; see Note 2). There are several correspondences between the two accounts. Most striking is that both Snorri and William combine the prophetic dream with the miraculous provisioning of the exiled king's troops. King Alfred's men are provided with more fish than an entire army would require, and in *Heimskringla*, just prior to the dream which helps Óláfr to decide his fate, God provides his companions with more food than they can eat (*Hkr* II, 325). The motif is ultimately derived from the story of Christ feeding the multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, but its occurrence in conjunction with a dream in which a deceased fellow countryman, who was during his lifetime also a man of God, exhorts a future great king to retake his kingdom raises the episode above the level of a hagiographic commonplace. Both accounts stress that the country is the rightful possession of the king, and they both emphasize the king's mental anxiety and indecision. When one considers the great difference between the subsequent earthly fates of these two kings, a similar episode reported at such a fateful juncture in their lives is striking.

"Bjarkamál" and the Song of Roland

In the *Legendary saga* (*LS* 182), "Óláfs saga helga" (*Hkr* II, 361–2), and the *Greatest saga* (*ÓS* (s) I, 547) Þormóðr Kolbrúnarskáld is said to have recited the heroic poem "The Old Lay of Bjarki" ("Bjarkamál en fornu") before the battle of Stiklastaðir. Klaus von See maintains that this scene has as little veracity as William of Malmesbury's reference to the recitation of the Song of Roland by the Normans prior to the battle of Hastings (*WM* 454; Douglas

1960, 99–100). Von See then discusses other battles in history where later accounts dramatically embroidered the facts with tales of soldiers' courage being boosted by heroic singing. Von See points out that this is the only event in the entire corpus of medieval Scandinavian literature where the recitation of a heroic lay is reported, and he argues the episode is a fabrication which owes its presence in Óláfr's saga to Icelandic kings' saga authors' familiarity with William's history (von See 1976, 1–13). If von See is correct, the presence of the episode in all these texts would most likely indicate that the borrowing originally occurred in the "Oldest saga" and was retained by the later saga authors.

The close textual correspondence between "Óláfs saga helga" and the *Legendary saga*, which Snorri did not use as a source, makes it virtually certain that it was the author of the "Oldest saga" who first transferred William of Malmesbury's description of William the Conqueror falling when he set foot in England to Óláfr Haraldsson's arrival in Norway. The author of the *Legendary saga* and Snorri both retained the episode (*LS* 66; *Hsk* II, 36). Neither von See's assertion that the recitation of "Bjarkamál" is a literary fiction derived from William, nor Moberg's suspicion that William was the source of Snorri's account of the events which led to the battle of Helgeå, nor my suggestion concerning the relationship between William's history and Snorri's account of Óláfr's dream while in exile is convincing in itself. But the case for a literary borrowing from William in the episode in which Óláfr falls upon his arrival in Norway is very persuasive. If we agree that this was the case, additional borrowings from William are possible as well, and if William's *Gesta regum* was available in Iceland, there is no reason why it could not have been consulted by Icelandic saga writers at various times. Such borrowings need not only have taken the form of direct translation of parts of William's Latin text into Norse. William's history could have influenced Icelandic authors at a more general creative level. The recitation of "Bjarkamál" at Stiklastaðir and Óláfr's dream are two cases which illustrate how William's history might have continued to supply dramatic inspiration to the later authors of kings' sagas. Óláfr's fall and the recitation of "Bjarkamál" are present in both the *Legendary saga* and in "Óláfs saga helga." It is therefore likely that both these episodes were once to be found in the "Oldest saga." But if Moberg is correct in detecting a close textual correspondence between William and Snorri in the events prior to the battle of Helgeå, this borrowing must have been made later. Furthermore, Óláfr's dream while in exile does not occur in the *Legendary saga* and could represent another later borrowing from William by Snorri. These observations all support the likelihood that William's history continued to be used as a source by Icelandic authors who wrote well after the

composition of the "Oldest saga," and Snorri Sturluson's use of William's history will be discussed in the next chapter.

LE PÈLERINAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE

Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne is an anonymous work known from a single manuscript (Royal 16 E VIII of the British Library) which was lost in the nineteenth century. However, the manuscript was edited several times prior to its disappearance. The language of the text is Anglo-Norman, and the composition of the work has been variously dated to as early as the end of the eleventh century or as late as the thirteenth century. There is, however, a consensus among most scholars that the work originated in the mid to late twelfth century (*Le Pèlerinage* 1–2). The work once enjoyed a wider circulation than its single surviving manuscript might indicate. It was known in Iceland, and part of *Le Pèlerinage* was reworked and incorporated into the thirteenth-century *Karlamagnús saga* (KMS III, 189–92; Kramarz-Bein 1996, 208–9). Some version of *Le Pèlerinage* must have existed in Iceland before the composition of that saga, however, as the Icelandic "Rauðs þáttur" demonstrates. This þáttur incorporates elements of *Le Pèlerinage*'s description of King Hugon's palace, and Snorri used an abbreviated form of it in his two versions of the saga of Saint Óláfr (Foote 1959a, 48; Joan Turville-Petre 1947, 5–7). Therefore some form of *Le Pèlerinage* must have been present in Iceland prior to 1230.

Le Pèlerinage and the *Greatest saga* of Óláfr Haraldsson

The episode known as "Rauðs þáttur" was incorporated into "Óláfs saga helga" by Snorri in a greatly abbreviated form, but it is more completely told in the later *Greatest saga* of St. Óláfr. The vivid description of Rauðr's sleeping quarters where Óláfr stays one night hoping to have a prophetic dream, leaves no doubt that the hall's furnishings were modeled on the description of the sleeping hall of Hugon of Constantinople in *Le Pèlerinage*. Corresponding fantastic elements include an ornately decorated vaulted ceiling suspended by columns and a sleeping chamber which revolves in conjunction with the forces of nature. The wind causes the room to revolve in *Le Pèlerinage*, but it is caused by the course of the sun in "Rauðs þáttur" (see Note 3).

It is not surprising that a version of *Le Pèlerinage* should have found its way to the North by the early thirteenth century. There was an abundance of literary accounts surrounding the figure of Charlemagne circulating in England and on the Continent in the late twelfth century, and versions of works such as the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* and *De Carolo Magno* found their way to Iceland and were incorporated in versions of *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and elsewhere (see Chapter 3).

CONCLUSIONS

When one considers the bulk of sagas composed about him, there are surprisingly few literary borrowings from foreign sources in the sagas of St. Óláfr Haraldsson. Adam of Bremen's history was something of a staple for Scandinavian writers of history by the time of composition of Óláfr's sagas. The fact that Icelandic writers made use of his work is not surprising, but even the influence of Adam's history on Óláfr's sagas is relatively minor. More interesting is the incorporation of Continental European material originally composed about Charlemagne in Snorri's "Óláfs saga helga" and the *Greatest saga*, but this parallels the composition of the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason and is not surprising either. What is striking is the extensive use made by Icelandic saga authors of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*. This particular English source was consulted more than any other foreign work of history by authors of the sagas of St. Óláfr.

Although William's history plays a significant role in the composition of sagas surrounding Óláfr Haraldsson, it is clear, however, that the amount of foreign source material incorporated into his sagas by Icelandic historians is relatively small. This is most likely due to the fact that Óláfr was revered as a saint almost immediately after his death at Stiklastaðir. People who had been associated with him continued to live long after his death, and the combination of these two facts must have resulted in the establishment of an oral tradition about the events of his life at a very early date (Johnsen 1922, xix–xx). In addition, a very large number of nearly contemporaneous skaldic verses describing events in Óláfr's life survives. Many skalds composed for Óláfr during his lifetime, and three skalds, Þormóðr Kolbrúnarskald, Gizurr gullbráðrskald, and Þorfinnr munnr, were present with Óláfr on the battlefield when he was killed. Óláfr's skalds Sigvatr Þórðarson and Óttarr svarti were especially prolific. Snorri's "Óláfs saga helga" contains seventeen stanzas or parts of stanzas attributed to Óttarr, and no fewer than eighty stanzas which are attributed to Sigvatr. "Óláfs saga helga" also includes an additional fifteen stanzas from Sigvatr's *Erfidrápa*, a eulogy composed by Sigvatr to commemorate Óláfr after his death. The important role played by skaldic poetry in the transmission of the Óláfr material seems to have assured Óláfr a position of prominence among the ranks of Norwegian kings without the need for much embellishment from foreign literary sources. The many hagiographic commonplaces related in his sagas should thus most accurately be regarded as superficial additions to the native traditions already attached to the life of this king.

Chapter Five

The Period of the Great Compilations *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla*

The textual histories of the three great compendia of kings' sagas, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* have been given above (see Chapter 1). It will suffice here to restate that *Morkinskinna* was written around the year 1220. It begins with the early years of the life of King Magnús Ólafsson (ruled 1035–1047) and breaks off with the death of Eysteinn Haraldsson in 1155. *Fagrskinna* begins with the reign of Hálfðan svarti in the middle of the ninth century and ends with the death of King Magnús Erlingsson in 1177. It was written circa 1225. The sagas contained in *Heimskringla* span approximately the same historical period as *Fagrskinna*, although *Heimskringla* differs in that it begins with “Ynglingasaga,” a saga of legendary material which traces the mythic origins of the Norwegian ruling dynasty down to the ninth century. It was most likely written by the Icelander Snorri Sturluson around the year 1230. The author of *Fagrskinna* is believed to have used a version of *Morkinskinna* as a source, and Snorri made use of both *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna* as sources for his own *Heimskringla*.

“MAGNÚSS SAGA INS GÓÐA”

Magnús Ólafsson, who had lived in exile in Russia after the death of his father Óláfr Haraldsson at the battle of Stiklastaðir in 1030, ruled Norway between the years 1035 and 1047 after the flight of the Danish king Sveinn Álfífuson in 1035, who had ruled Norway for a short time under the auspices of his father King Knútr the Great. Extensive versions of Magnús' saga are contained in *Morkinskinna* and *Fagrskinna*, and Snorri made use of both texts for his “Magnúss saga ins góða” in *Heimskringla* (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 236; *Fagr*

cxxv-cxxviii; *Hkr* III, v-viii; Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson 1936, 197–227). There are a number of identifiable borrowings from foreign sources found in these versions of “Magnúss saga.”

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was disseminated in the late ninth century, during the reign and probably under the patronage of King Alfred. The *Chronicle* drew on sets of written annals and histories extending back to the beginning of the Christian era, and it is thought that the original version of the *Chronicle* continued to either the year 840 or 855, or perhaps even later, before copies of the *Chronicle* were sent out to various regional institutions and centers of learning throughout Anglo-Saxon England, where they were continued and supplemented with varying degrees of independence from one another. The many versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are thus best regarded as individual texts stemming from a common narrative core, each with considerable local variations and independent additions of various materials such as charters, religious texts, and heroic narratives which differentiate them from one another (Swanton 1998, xviii-xxi).

The textual relationships among the extant versions of the *Chronicle* are complex and lie beyond the scope of this investigation (see Swanton 1998, xxviii-xxix). The oldest manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is (A), the Winchester manuscript kept at Cambridge (Corpus Christi College MS 173, ff. 1–32). This is usually referred to as the Parker Chronicle and is the oldest extant version. There are two manuscripts related to one another called the Abingdon manuscripts (B) (British Library MSS Cotton Tiberius Aiii, f. 178, and Avi, ff. 1–34) and (C) (British Library MS Cotton Tiberius Bi, ff. 115–64). Three other manuscripts are thought to be derived from an older, now lost “Northern Version” of the *Chronicle*; namely, (D) the Worcester manuscript (British Library MS Cotton Tiberius Biv, ff. 3–86); (E) the Peterborough manuscript (Oxford Bodleian Library MS Laud 636); and (F) the Canterbury Bi-Lingual Epitome (British Library MS Cotton Domitian Aviii, ff. 30–70). The latter manuscript contains a Latin translation following each Old English entry. (E) is the youngest version of the *Chronicle*. It was copied from another exemplar after a fire in the monastic library at Peterborough in 1116 and was subsequently continued through the year 1154.

It appears that the later authors of kings' sagas had access to some version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Ove Moberg and E. Ekwall both detected a very close textual correspondence between the description of the successors to the English throne after the death of Knútr the Great found in the (E)

version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the account found in *Heimskringla* (Moberg 1941, 217–20; Ekwall 1928, 218–21). The account of the succession of Hǫrðaknútr to the English throne after the death of his brother Harold in the (E) version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reads as follows (*ASC* I, 297–299 years 1040–1041; emphasis added):

1040 . . . on ðis ilcan geare . com **Eadward Æðelredes sunu cinges** hider to lande of Weallande . **se wæs Hardacnutes broðor cynges** . hi wæron begen Ælgiues suna . **se wæs Ricardes dohtor eorles**. 1041 . . . **he wæs cyng ofer eall Englalund twa gear** buton x. nihtum . 7 **he is bebyrged** on caldan mynstre **on Winceastre** . mid Cnute cyng **his fæder**. 7 ear þan þe he bebyrged wære . eall folc geceas Eadward to cyng on Lundene.

(1040 . . . And in this same year Edward, King Æthelred's son, came here to this land from a foreign country. He was the brother of King Harthacnut; they were both sons of Ælfgifu, who was the daughter of Earl Richard. 1041 . . . and he was king over all England for two years, all but 10 days; and he is buried in the Old Minster in Winchester with King Cnut, his father. And before he was buried, all the people chose Edward as king in London [translation by Swanton 1998, 161–63].)

The following passage found in “Magnúss saga ins góða,” which also contains an account of the reign and death of Hǫrðaknútr, appears to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon text (*Hkr* III, 31–2, emphasis added):

Var hann þá konungr bæði yfir Englandi ok Danaveldi. Réð hann því ríki tvá vetr. Hann varð sótt dauðr á Englandi ok **er jarðaðr í Vincestr hjá feðr sínum.** Eptir andlát hans var til konungs tekinn í Englandi **Eatvarðr inn góði, sonr Aðalráðs Englakonungs** ok Emmu dróttningar, **dóttur Ríkarðar Rúðujarls. Eaðvarðr konungr var bróðir sammœðri Haralds ok Hǫrða-Knúts.**

(He was then king over both England and Denmark. He ruled that kingdom two winters. He died of illness in England and is buried in Winchester next to his father. After his death Edward the Good was received as king in England, the son of Æthelred King of England and Queen Emma, the daughter of Richard, Earl of Rouen. King Edward was the maternal brother of Harold and Hǫrðaknútr.)

There are several superficial differences in the two accounts. First of all, there is a discrepancy between the phrases “after his death” (“Eptir andlát hans”) and “before he was buried” (“ear þan þe he bebyrged wære”) in the two

accounts, but the terms are by no means mutually exclusive. Furthermore, although the Old English account refers to "Queen Ælfgifu" and the Norse account to "Queen Emma," Æthelred's wife and queen was called both Emma and Álfifa at different times in her life, and the two names most likely represent the traditional expectations of two different audiences (for a discussion of the two names see *EE* 55–61). A more substantial objection which might be raised is that the Old Norse account need not be derived from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but perhaps from another English or Anglo-Norman source. It has long been known that Icelanders made use of written English genealogies, and this has been argued convincingly for the *Snorra Edda* (Sievers 1892, 361–63; Heusler 1908, 66–68; Faulkes 1977, 177–90). But there are several factors which make the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and not another English history the most likely source for the Old Norse authors. The *Chronicle* was very widely disseminated throughout England, and a great deal of authority was attached to it. Many twelfth-century English historians such as John of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon used the *Chronicle* as a source for their own works (*HH* xci–xcviii; *JWII*, xix–xx; *JWIII*, xix–xxvi; Stubbs 1887, xx), and it would not have been unusual for Icelandic saga authors to do the same thing. The most compelling factor which indicates that a version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was used as a source by authors of kings' sagas is further evidence of the *Chronicle's* influence on the Old Norse texts. *Morkinskinna*, for example, mistakenly places the year of Edward the Confessor's succession in 1042, instead of in the correct year 1043: "And after the death of Hakon [Knútr] that same spring Edward the Good, the son of King Ethelred, was received as king in England . . . Edward was consecrated king on the first day of Easter" ("En eptir lát Hákonar [Knútr] þat sama vár var tekinn til konungs í Englandi Játvarðr inn góði, sonr Aðalráðs konungs . . . Játvarðr var vígðr til konungs páskadag inn fyrsta" [*Msk* 34]). "That same spring" refers to the year of Hǫrðaknútr's death, or 1042. This date accords with the (E) version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, where the year of Edward's coronation is given under the year 1042, whereas the (C) and (D) versions correctly give the year as 1043: "1042. Here Edward was consecrated as king in Winchester on Easter day" ("Millesimo. XLII. Her wæs Æðward gehalgod to cyng on Winceastre . on Æster dæg" [*ASC* I, (E) 299]).

Another example of the *Morkinskinna* author having used a version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* might be found in the date given in "Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar" for the encounter between the forces of Haraldr harðráði and Tostig Godwinson and the two Northumbrian earls Morkere and Eadwine at the River Ouse just prior to the battle at Stamford Bridge in September 1066. *Morkinskinna* tells us "it was the evening before Saint Matthew's Day, and it

[St. Matthew's Day] fell on a Wednesday" ("Þetta var Mathéúsmessu aptan, en hon stóð þá á Óðinsdegi" [*Msk* 269]). This accords almost perfectly with the date given in the (C) version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, in which the text states "and this fight was on the Vigil of St. Matthew the Apostle, and that was Wednesday" ("þis gefeoht wæs on Vigilia Mathei Apli . 7 wæs Wodnesdæg" [*ASC* I, 338]).

The *Morkinskinna* author apparently misunderstood the Old English text and took Wednesday to be St. Matthew's Day. In fact, the Old English text states that the battle was fought on Wednesday, the vigil of St. Matthew's Day, which was on Thursday. This was an understandably easy mistake to make, and both *Fagrskinna* (*Fagr* 279) and *Heimskringla* correct the error. *Heimskringla* states "the battle was on Wednesday, the first day before St. Matthew's Day" ("Orrosta var miðvikudag, næsta dag fyrir Mathéúsdag" [*Hkr* III, 181]). Nevertheless, the wording of the accounts is so close as to leave no doubt that some written version of at least parts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was the source for the *Morkinskinna* author. *Morkinskinna's* dates for the succession of Edward the Confessor and the battle at the River Ouse make it very likely that the *Morkinskinna* author made use of a text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the purpose of establishing chronology, and that this text bore features derived from both the (C) and (E) versions of the *Chronicle* (Gade, "Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Anglo-Norman Sources," Unpublished MS., 46, 56–8; Anderson and Gade 2000, 74–5).

The Norman *Genealogia regum Anglie*

In its version of "Magnúss saga góða" *Morkinskinna* gives a unique account of the death of Hǫrðaknútr, the son of Knútr the Great. According to the *Morkinskinna* author, Hǫrðaknútr was accidentally poisoned when he consumed a drink which had been prepared by his mother Emma (Álfifa) and was intended for Magnús of Norway (*Msk* 33–4):

[Álfifa] skenkr honum síðan ok biðr hann drekka. Magnús konungr segir: "Fyrst skal Hákon drekka, ok honum skal fyrst alla þjónusta veita." Síðan fær hon Hákon hornit, ok drakk hann af ok mælti við, er hann kastaði niðr horninu: "Eigi skyldi." Eigi gat hann lengra mælt ok æpti síðan til bana. Ok sýndisk nu þessi svik Álfifu við Magnús konung, því at hon hafði honum ætlat þenna dauðadrykk. En hon var þegar allr í brott, ok mátti henni því ekki hegna.

([Álfifa] poured for him and asked him to drink. King Magnús said: "Hákon [Knútr] should drink first and have precedence in every form of

service." Then she gave the horn to Hákon [Knútr], and he drank it off, exclaiming, as he cast the horn aside, "shouldn't have," but he got no further and gave his death groan. This demonstrated Álfifa's treachery toward King Magnús because she intended the fatal drink for him. But she vanished instantly so that she could not be punished [translation by Andersson and Gade 2000, 111].)

The only other known historical source to attribute Hǫrðaknútr's death to poisoning by his mother is a Norman redaction of the *Genealogia regum Anglie*. The *Genealogia regum Anglie* is preserved today in an early thirteenth-century manuscript at the monastery of St. Evroult, France (MS de Alençon No. 20 fol. 56–57). Though the extant manuscript is from the early thirteenth century, it is likely based on an older twelfth-century exemplar. Le Prévost has argued that an older version of this text was used by the historian Orderic Vitalis as a source for Book VII of his *Ecclesiastical History* (Gade, "Anglo-Saxon, Norman, and Anglo-Norman Sources," Unpublished MS., 44–5). The corresponding account in the *Genealogia regum Anglie* reads as follows (le Prévost, li-iiv; emphasis added):

Sed ipse [Haraldr Harefoot] paulo post supervixit et nolens Hardechunuto regnum reliquit. Ardecunutus autem Edvuardem, fratrem suum uterinum, a Normannia revocavit, et post duos annos, in nuptiis Osgodi Clape, qui filiam suam Githam Tovi danico dabat, **veneno dato periit ab Emma.**

(But he [Harold Harefoot] [only] survived [him] by a little, and [though] he did not want this, left the kingdom to Hǫrðaknútr. Hǫrðaknútr, however, recalled Edward, his uterine brother from Normandy. And two years later at the wedding celebration put on by Osgod Clapa, who had married his daughter Gyða to the Dane Tovi, he died of poison which had been given [him] by Emma.)

The anonymous redactor of the Norman *Genealogia regum Anglie* and the *Morkinskinna* author both knew a historical tradition which is not recorded in any of the Insular histories, but according to which Hǫrðaknútr was poisoned by Emma. Reputed poisonings of famous persons are notably uncommon in British histories, but they abound in Norman histories of the eleventh and twelfth centuries to the point where death by poisoning can be regarded as a distinctly Norman historiographical feature (Douglas 1964, 408–15). The alleged poisoning of Hǫrðaknútr could have been a tradition which later Scandinavian travelers to Normandy either heard or read and

then carried back to the North when they returned. It might also be the case, however, that the *Morkinskinna* author made direct use of the *Genealogia regum Anglie* or another closely related text. This is not unlikely. There was much contact between Normans and Scandinavians in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the rest of this chapter will show that the influence of written Norman histories on the later Scandinavian kings' sagas was very significant indeed.

"HARALDS SAGA SIGURÐARSONAR" AND THE NORMAN AND ANGLO-NORMAN HISTORIANS

One of the most colorful of the Norwegian kings was Haraldr Sigurðarson, also known as Haraldr harðráði ("Haraldr the hardruler"). According to the sagas Haraldr fought as a young man alongside his brother Óláfr Haraldsson at the Battle of Stiklastaðir in 1030. Haraldr escaped from this battle wounded and eventually became a Varangian chieftain in the service of the Byzantine emperor in the Mediterranean. After enjoying a certain amount of success there Haraldr returned to Norway with a great deal of wealth and ruled jointly with his nephew Magnús Ólafsson from 1046 until Magnús' death in 1047. Haraldr then became sole ruler of Norway until he was killed at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066 during an expedition to conquer England. Haraldr was very much a warrior king, and his youthful adventures in the Mediterranean, his strong domestic rule of Norway, his wars with Denmark, and his fondness for Icelanders and Icelandic story-tellers and poets all combined to make him a popular subject for Icelandic writers of kings' sagas. Versions of "Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar" are told in all three of the great compendia.

There are several episodes related in the *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* versions of "Haralds saga" which are derived from foreign sources. Works of Norman historians in particular seem to have been frequently consulted by the author of *Morkinskinna*, and many of these episodes were retained by the later saga authors. Numerous ingenious tricks and stratagems devised by clever chieftains in order to gain victory in a siege are described in the works of various Norman historians such as William of Jumièges, William of Apulia, and Wace. They are also found in "Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar" (White 1999).

William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*

The Norman monk William of Jumièges (ca. 1000–1071) wrote his *Gesta Normannorum ducum* between the years 1050 and 1060. His work was a

revision and an expansion of the earlier history of the Norman dukes, *De moribus et actis primorum Normannorum ducum*, written by Dudo of Saint-Quentin ca. 996–1015 (*WJ* I, xix–xx). After the Norman conquest of England in 1066 William returned to his history and revised it between the years 1067 and 1070. He is presumed to have died shortly afterward, but his work enjoyed an extremely wide dissemination throughout the Middle Ages (*WJ* I, xxxi–xxxii). There occur several interesting correspondences between accounts found in William's *Gesta Normannorum ducum* and those in the later Icelandic sagas.

One of the most striking correspondences concerns William's account of how the Viking chieftain Hasting seized the town of Luna in northern Italy. According to William, when Hasting realized that Luna was not going to be taken easily, he and his men pretended that he had died, and they dressed his body and asked the inhabitants of the town for permission to bury Hasting inside. Eager for the rich gifts and offerings which would accompany such a burial, the townspeople agreed. But at the precise moment when Hasting was being carried through the city gate, he sprang from the bier upon which he was being carried, called his men around him, and they took the city by surprise (*WJ* I, 24–5; see Note 1).

This particular stratagem is not unique to William's history, and a very similar account is related by another Norman historian, William of Apulia, concerning Robert Guiscard's conquest of a town in Sicily (*WA* col. 1046; see Note 1). The story might represent something of a commonplace among Norman historians, but the same story is also told of the Norwegian Haraldr harðráði in the *Morkinskinna* (*Msk* 73–76), *Fagrskinna* (*Fagr* 232–33), and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III, 80–81) versions of his saga (White 1999; see Note 1).

The *Roman de Brut* of Wace

Morkinskinna (*Msk* 69–71), *Fagrskinna* (*Fagr* 231–32), and *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III, 76–7) all tell a story of how Haraldr harðráði had birds which dwelled in a particular town he was besieging in the Mediterranean caught and then laden with combustibles and released in order to cause the town to catch fire. The story cannot have originated with the author of *Morkinskinna*. Like the literary motif of feigning the death of a besieging chieftain, lading birds with combustibles in order to gain victory in a siege has its literary antecedents in Norman historical sources. The Anglo-Norman historian Wace (ca. 1110–80) described just such an event in his *Roman de Brut*, which he composed between 1150 and 1155. His work is a poetic reworking and translation of the earlier English histories of Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntington into

Anglo-Norman, and thirty-two manuscripts and fragments of Wace's work are still extant and testify to the text's popularity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (*Roman de Brut* xi–xxv). One passage in the *Roman de Brut* describes a siege of the town of Cirencester in Gloucestershire by a certain King Gormund, who eventually sets fire to and takes the town by hanging combustibles onto the feet of birds who nested within the city walls at night (*Roman de Brut* ll. 13,593–610; see Note 2).

Scholars, most notably Jan de Vries and Elisabeth van Houts, have noticed the overlapping Norman and Scandinavian literary traditions before. Van Houts sees these correspondences as evidence that Scandinavians continued to travel south to Normandy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and that they brought their literary traditions with them. She pictures a scenario in which Scandinavian visitors to Normandy told stories there which influenced and colored the Norman historical accounts of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis, and others (van Houts 1983). Evidence which supports van Houts's view includes incidents such as Orderic Vitalis' report that Robert Guiscard refused to cut his hair until he was victorious in Sicily (*OV* IV, 20–23). This dramatic literary moment recalls the legendary vow made by Haraldr hárfagri concerning his intention to conquer Norway in the late ninth century (*Hkr* I, 97). Van Houts's explanation is further supported by more factual information such as the skald Sigvatr Þórðarson's stay in Rouen which is reported in "Óláfs saga helga" (*Hkr* II, 271), and also the visit paid by Sigurðr Jórsalafari and his entourage to Normandy while making their pilgrimage to the holy land (*Hkr* III, 240).

Jan de Vries had a different explanation for the literary motifs common to both Scandinavian and Norman histories. He believed that there was a stock of literary traditions in southern Europe which became known to the Norman and Scandinavian mercenaries and adventurers who were active in the Mediterranean. According to de Vries, familiar tales were simply ascribed to different chieftains or kings in the course of oral, and later, written literary tradition. Former Varangians or Norman mercenaries returning to their respective homelands might tell virtually the same story, simply attaching the deeds in question to different leaders. The Norman accounts were then written down in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, while oral Scandinavian versions circulated in Iceland a bit longer until they were written down in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (de Vries 1931). Evidence supporting his view might be found in "Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar" where the presence of "Latin men" is mentioned. These men fought alongside the Scandinavian Varangians, and are likely to have been Norman mercenaries (*Hkr* III, 74 n. 1; White 1999).

Both van Houts's and de Vries's explanations go a long way toward explaining the many curious correspondences in Norman and Scandinavian histories, but they need not exhaust the range of possible explanations. Evidence for an even closer literary connection between Scandinavian and Norman histories can be found in examining other potential incidents of literary borrowings.

The Battle of Stamford Bridge and Norman accounts of the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings

The *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* accounts of the Battle of Hastings contain information which must be derived from foreign sources. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson noticed that Snorri's version of the events leading up to Hastings in *Heimskringla* seems to echo the history of the Anglo-Norman William of Malmesbury, while the *Morkinskinna* version more closely resembles the historical accounts of William of Jumièges and Orderic Vitalis (*Hkr* III, xxviii). Consider the following passage in *Morkinskinna* (*Msk* 285–86):

Ok á þat ofan svarði Haraldr jarl Vilhjálmi jarli eiða at skríni Odmarus, at hann skyldi aldri vera í mót honum . . . Ok nú er þar til at taka er Vilhjálmr er kominn sunnan á England, ok leggr undir sik þar sem hann kóm . . . Hann lét binda við merki sitt skríni Odmarus, þat sama er Haraldr hafði svarit at. Þeir Haraldr konungr ok Vilhjálmr áttu orrostu mikla er þeir fundusk, ok var þat .xii. mánuðum [sic] eptir fall Haralds konungs Sigurðarsonar. Ok veitir Haraldi þungt orrostan. Ok þá mælti hann: "Hvat er bundit við merki Vilhjálms?" Ok er honum sagt. "Þá kann vera," sagði Haraldr konungr, "at eigi megi undan komask." Þar fell Haraldr konungr Goðinason ok Gyrðr bróðir hans (*Msk* 284–86).

(In addition, jarl Harold swore oaths to jarl William on the reliquary of Odmarus, that he would never be opposed to him . . . Now we pick up the story at the moment when William had arrived in southern England and was subjugating the country wherever he went . . . He let the relics of Odmarus be tied to his standard, those very relics on which Harold had sworn. King Harold and William fought a great battle when they met. That was twelve months after the fall of King Haraldr Sigurðarson. The battle did not go in Harold's favor. Then he said: "What is tied to William's standard?" And he was told. "Then it may be," said King Harold, "that there will be no escape." There fell King Harold Godwinson and his brother Gyrth [translation by Andersson and Gade 2000, 277].)

That King Edward had promised the throne of England to William of Normandy and that Harold Godwinson had sworn to support William's succession is a distinctly Norman tradition. It is told by William of Jumièges (*WJ* II, 160–61), William of Poitiers (*WP* 30–32, 100–04), and Orderic Vitalis (*OV* II, 134–37). It is referred to in the *Carmen de Hastingæ Proelio* (*CHP* II, 239–40), can be seen depicted in the Bayeux tapestry, and can also be read in the later Anglo-Norman William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* (*WM* I, 416–19, 446–53), who reports that an oath had been sworn ("sacramento firmavit" [*WM* I, 418]), but does not refer to it being sworn on any holy relics.

Heimskringla does not mention any holy relics. In *Heimskringla* William of Normandy is motivated to invade England by right of his kinship with Edward the Confessor and to avenge the betrothal between Harold Godwinson and William's daughter which Harold had failed to live up to (*Hkr* III, 169–70, 193). This betrothal is reported in various Norman sources, specifically, in William of Poitiers (*WP* 230), in Orderic Vitalis' interpolations of William of Jumièges (*WJ* II, 160–61), and in the *Gesta regum* of William of Malmesbury, who adds that Harold felt freed from the betrothal, because the daughter in question had died by the time of Harold's succession (*WM* I, 418–19, 446–47, 504–05; Freeman 1873, III, 472–74). Thus William of Malmesbury and *Heimskringla* both seem to conflate Harold's oath to support William of Normandy's claim to the English throne with an oath made to marry his daughter.

The author of *Morkinskinna*, however, mentions holy relics in addition to the betrothal (*Msk* 284–85), and he assigns a prominent role to the relics in determining the outcome of the battle. Norman sources which refer to such relics are Orderic Vitalis (*OV* II, 134–7) and William of Poitiers (*WP* 180–82). Furthermore, only Orderic and William of Poitiers specifically mention that the same reliquary on which Harold had sworn was attached to either the person of William or his standard during the battle. Thus the only historical authors to mention the betrothal between Harold and William's daughter, and the relics upon which Harold had sworn, and to attach these relics to the person of William during the battle of Hastings, are William of Poitiers, Orderic Vitalis, and the author of *Morkinskinna*. In contrast to *Heimskringla*, which shares many of the details leading up to Hastings with William of Malmesbury's account, the passage in *Morkinskinna* in which holy relics play so large a role points not only to distinctly Continental Norman as opposed to Insular or Anglo-Norman influence on the *Morkinskinna* text, it also suggests that the *Morkinskinna* author had access to some version of at least parts of the works of either Orderic or William of Poitiers, or to a

common source used by both of these men (*Hkr* III, xxviii; Gade 1997). This supposition finds some support in an additional correspondence between *Morkinskinna* and William of Poitiers. Both texts describe an earlier embassy sent to William of Normandy by Edward the Confessor in 1051, by means of which Edward promised William his throne after his death. These two accounts specifically mention that the embassy was led by Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury (*Msk* 284; *WP* 30). The only sources which mention Robert's visit to Normandy are *Morkinskinna*, William of Poitiers, and William of Jumièges (*WJ* II, 159 n.6).

Though it does not seem to be possible to determine more specifically which Norman history influenced the later authors of "Haralds saga," Kari Ellen Gade has suggested that the Norman source used by the *Morkinskinna* author was likely an abbreviated and interpolated version of either Orderic Vitalis' *Ecclesiastical History* or William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum* (Gade 1997, 77–81). Such shortened versions are known to have existed and circulated and one, *Quedam exceptiones* is still extant (printed in *WJ* II, 290–304). The additional close correspondence described below between Orderic Vitalis' account of the movements of Tostig Godwinson in 1065–66 and later Scandinavian tradition concerning Tostig's movements further emphasizes the likelihood of there having been a close relationship between Continental Norman historical traditions and those which circulated in early thirteenth-century Iceland.

Orderic Vitalis' *Ecclesiastical History*

Orderic Vitalis was born in Shrewsbury, England in 1075. At the age of ten in 1085 he was sent to the monastery of St. Evroul in Normandy, where he became a Benedictine monk, and where, with the exception of occasional short journeys outside his monastery, he remained until he died ca. 1143 (*OV* I, 1–6, 113 n.1). Orderic proved to be a gifted historian. He interpolated William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, (*WJ* I, xxi; *OV* I, 29–30) and eventually wrote his own *Ecclesiastical History* between the years 1114 and 1141 (*OV* I, 31, 112). His work did not circulate in its entirety outside his monastery of St. Evroult, where it remained until modern times. This was probably due to its voluminous size, but smaller excerpts and abbreviations of parts of Orderic's history did circulate in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (*OV* I, 113–15; Gade 1997, 77–81).

After the Battle of Stamford Bridge and William of Normandy's victory over Harold Godwinson at Hastings an erroneous tradition arose concerning the movements of Tostig Godwinson in connection with his brother Harold's coronation in 1066. English sources make it clear that Tostig had been Earl of

Northumbria, but owing to his extremely unpopular rule, which culminated in a rebellion by his subjects, he was summoned to court and expelled from England by Edward the Confessor in November of 1065 (*JW* II, 596–99; *ASCI*, 331–3; *WMI*, 364–5, 466–67; *Life of Edward* 50–55; Freeman 1873, III, 201, 477–80). However, Scandinavian historical tradition widely reports that Tostig was not expelled by Edward the Confessor, but was driven from the country by his brother Harold after Harold's succession to the throne of England upon Edward's death (*Agrip* 56–7; *Msk* 262–3). The *Heimskringla* version reads as follows (*Hkr* III, 172):

En er Haraldr varð þess varr, at Tósti, bróðir hans, vildi hafa hann af konungdóminum, þá trúði hann honum illa, því at Tósti var maðr forvitri ok maðr mikill ok átti vel vingat við landshofðingja. Tók þá Haraldr konungr af Tósta jarli herstjórnina ok allt þat vald, er hann hafði áðr haft frammar en aðrir jarlar þar í landi. Tósti jarl vildi þat fyrir engan mun þola at vera þjónostumaðr bróður síns samborins. Fór hann þá í brot með liði sínu um sjá í Flandr.

(And when Harold became aware of this, that Tostig, his brother, wanted to deprive him of his kingdom, then he no longer trusted him, because Tostig was a very wise and powerful man and he was on good terms with the chieftains of the country. King Harold then took the command of the army from him, and also all the power which he had previously held above the other earls there in the country. Earl Tostig would not suffer to be a vassal to his brother born of the same parents. He then left the country together with his force of men and sailed south across the sea to Flanders.)

The only historian outside of Scandinavia who writes that Tostig had been forced to leave England by his brother Harold after the death of Edward is Orderic Vitalis (*OV* II, 138–39):

Tunc Tosticus Goduini comitis filius aduertens Heraldii fratris sui præualere facinus, et regnum Angliæ uariis grauari oppressionibus ægre tulit, contradixit, et aperte repugnare decreuit. Vnde Heraldus patris consulum quem Tosticus quia maior natu erat, longo tempore sub Eduardo rege iam tenuerat ei violenter abstulit, ipsumque exulare compulit. Exul igitur Tosticus Flandriam expetiit.

(But Tostig, Earl Godwin's son, seeing that the wickedness of his brother had prevailed, and that the kingdom was groaning under every kind of oppression, took the matter to heart, resolved to oppose him, and openly

declared war on him. At this Harold in anger deprived him of their father's earldom which Tostig, the elder by birth, had held for a long time under King Edward, and forced him into exile. Banished from home Tostig sought refuge in Flanders [translation by Chibnall].)

Orderic's version of these events is strikingly similar to the later Scandinavian tradition. There is room for debate as to whether the correspondence between these accounts is due to oral information derived from Scandinavian visitors, for example pilgrims traveling through Normandy to Rome (van Houts 1983), or whether Scandinavian travelers carried an originally Norman historical tradition represented by Orderic back to the North in an oral or written form (Gade 1997; White 1999). But the many additional correspondences between Norman and later Scandinavian historical traditions concerning the events surrounding and leading up to the Battle of Hastings discussed above lend most weight to the latter possibility. That Icelanders may have had access to Norman histories should not be surprising. The Norwegian Theodoricus monachus mentions having read the *Gesta Normannorum ducum* in connection with his attempts to ascertain the place of Óláfr Haraldsson's baptism (MHN 22; see Chapter 2). There was obviously little reluctance on the part of Theodoricus to consult a foreign source, and this particular Norman source was regarded as authoritative. We should therefore regard the prospect of Icelandic historians consulting Norman histories as by no means far-fetched. A pilgrim route through Normandy existed for Scandinavians traveling to Rome in the twelfth century (Springer 1950), and members of Icelandic monastic houses, as so many writers of kings' sagas were (see Chapters 1 and 3), could easily have come into direct contact with written Norman histories while making pilgrimages or executing other church business and then later used some form of these histories as source material for their own works (White 1999). The majority of the monastic houses in question in both Iceland and Normandy in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were Benedictine. This fact would have greatly facilitated the transmission of historical traditions, because the Benedictine houses of Normandy would have been the ones most likely to afford lodging and hospitality to their Icelandic brethren monks on their way to and from pilgrimage sites further south.

"MAGNÚSSONA SAGA"

After the death of King Magnús berfœttr in 1103, the rule of Norway passed to his three sons Óláfr (d. 1116), Eysteinn (d. 1122), and Sigurðr (d. 1130). Óláfr died too young to have much influence on the period in question, but

the joint rule of Eysteinn and Sigurðr presented saga writers with an interesting study in contrasts. Eysteinn quietly but competently carried out effective domestic policies and managed the economic growth of Norway at home. Sigurðr, on the other hand, possessed a more flamboyant personality and between the years 1108 and 1111 he led a fleet of Norwegian ships on what came to be a famous pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Koht 1924, 153–54), during which he visited Constantinople and met the Byzantine emperor before returning to Norway. Sigurðr's voyage was remembered and embellished by later writers of kings' sagas and it earned him the nickname by which he would always be known, Sigurðr Jórslafari ("Sigurðr the Jerusalem traveler"). Saga writers' interest in the two kings' different personalities resulted in the well-known "mannjafnaðr" ("comparison of men") episode in *Morkinskinna* (Msk 382–85) and *Heimskringla* (Hkr III, 259–62), which is often regarded as the best example of such a literary scene in all of Old Norse literature (*Lex. d. an. Lit.* 239). The various writers and redactors of "Magnússona saga" used foreign sources to help them illustrate what they regarded as interesting differences between the two men.

Ovid's *Remedia amoris*

Ovid's works were known at a relatively early date in Iceland. "Jóns saga," the saga of the Icelandic bishop Jón Ögmundarson (1052–1121), tells how Jón once reproached the young Kloengr Þorsteinsson for reading Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (Bsk I, 165 n. 3; see Chapter 1). Icelanders therefore had access to at least some of Ovid's works as early as the beginning of the twelfth century and other works by him are known to have been popular by the early thirteenth century (Schlauch 1934, 46).

One scene in *Morkinskinna*'s version of this saga might reflect an awareness of Ovid's *Remedia amoris* by the *Morkinskinna* author. When his retainer Ívarr Ingimundarson becomes inexplicably depressed, King Eysteinn questions him until he finds out that Ívarr has succumbed to depression because his brother married the woman Ívarr loves and had intended to marry. Eysteinn invites Ívarr to come sit and talk with him repeatedly and as often as he wishes until he feels better, and eventually Ívarr's conversations with the king succeed in helping him to forget his love-sickness (Msk 354–56). Marianne Kalinke has suggested that this particular remedy for lovesickness was derived from Ovid (Kalinke 1984, 159–61), who wrote in his *Remedia amoris* (lines 587–89):

Nec tenebris uultus flebilis abde tuos.
Semper habe Pyladen aliquem, qui curet Orestem.

(Do not flee conversation, do not let your door be closed, do not conceal your weeping face in the darkness. Always have a certain Pylades, who might attend to Orestes.)

If this scene in *Morkinskinna* is ultimately derived from Ovid's work, it testifies to a respectable degree of erudition on the part of the *Morkinskinna* author and makes the possibility of other literary borrowings by him elsewhere all the more likely.

William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*

Narrative material common to both William's history and later Scandinavian histories includes the story of a traveler to Constantinople, who, when prohibited from buying firewood, burns walnuts instead and thereby manages to impress the emperor with his ingenuity. This story was first told about the Norman duke Robert the Magnificent on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1035 in the "B" redaction of William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum* (WJ II, 83–5). This particular redaction of the *Gesta Normannorum ducum* also describes Robert as being so wealthy and splendidly attired that his horse is shod with golden horseshoes (WJ II, 82–3; see Note 3).

The story of the walnuts is told in *Morkinskinna* with reference to two Norwegian kings: Haraldr harðráði (*Msk* 65–6) and Sigurðr Jórslafari (*Msk* 350–51). *Morkinskinna*'s version of "Magnússona saga" further echoes William's *Gesta Normannorum ducum* when it describes Sigurðr's arrival in Constantinople as being so splendid, that his horse was shod with golden horseshoes (*Msk* 348; see Note 3).

There can be little doubt that by the beginning of the thirteenth century there existed in Iceland at least one copy of a version of the "B" redaction of William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, and that it was consulted by the *Morkinskinna* author for his descriptions of the adventures of Haraldr harðráði and Sigurðr Jórslafari. Whether the text in question was a complete copy of William's work, or whether it was merely a set of excerpts or notes, however, remains impossible to ascertain.

CONCLUSIONS

By the time the three great compendia *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* were composed, writers of kings' sagas had a very wide variety of sources at hand to choose from. The author of *Morkinskinna* seems to have favored, or perhaps merely had access to, Continental Norman source materials such as some form of the "B" redaction of the *Gesta Normannorum*

ducum and excerpts from the works of either Orderic Vitalis, William of Poitiers, or from both of these authors, in addition to a version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Snorri, who wrote later and used *Morkinskinna* as one of his sources, did not hesitate to depart from the *Morkinskinna* text and follow other historical traditions which were known to him. In particular, Snorri seems to have favored the historical traditions as recorded by the Anglo-Norman William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta regum Anglorum*.

Perhaps it was not a question of literary preference on the part of Snorri Sturluson and the authors of the other compendia, but one of source availability. Different circumstances can be expected to surround the composition of literary works at various points in time, and either due to the particular times at which the saga authors wrote, or due to the difference in geographical location between the places of composition of *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*, the saga writers made different use of the foreign sources available in Iceland at the time. *Heimskringla* was most likely composed at Reykjavik in the west of Iceland. The place of origin for *Morkinskinna* is much less certain, though the general location of the northwest has been suggested, and Theodore M. Andersson has made a case for Munkaþverá in the north (Andersson and Gade 2000, 67–72). Snorri seems to have had access to at least one text, a version of William's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, which the *Morkinskinna* author did not know. The fact that *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* were composed at different places might explain the *Morkinskinna* author's reliance on Continental Norman texts as opposed to the Insular sources which were available to Snorri. Writing at a later time than the *Morkinskinna* author, Snorri was in a position to judge the quality and perhaps the literary credibility of the Continental Norman accounts by means of his Icelandic source, and he kept, altered, or rejected the various accounts utilized by the *Morkinskinna* author without always having access to the Latin originals himself.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

The sources used by the early authors of historical works and of kings' sagas changed over time. For his *Íslendingabók* Ari Þorgilsson used a version of either the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* or *De miraculis Eadmundi*. He also knew Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. These are primarily religious works, and it is not surprising that they would be known to Ari, who in addition to being Iceland's first historian was also an ordained priest. Bede's church history was a standard work for any medieval library, and it was probably known in Iceland from a very early date. Adam's history contains much that would have appealed to educated Icelandic clerics such as Ari and the other authors who came after him, because Adam wrote at length about early missionary efforts to Scandinavia and the first two great Norwegian missionary kings, Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson. His history also contains a description of Iceland's first bishop, Ísleifr Gizurarson. It is not surprising that an account of the life of St. Edmund should have found its way to Iceland at a relatively early date. Edmund was closely associated with pre-Christian Icelandic history due to the fact that he allegedly died at the hands of the viking sons of Ragnarr loðbrók, whom many Icelanders, including Ari, regarded as one of their ancestors. When one considers the time and circumstances in which Ari is known to have written his *Íslendingabók*, his choice of sources seems quite appropriate. It is an interesting, but open question whether Ari judged these historical sources to be preferable to others at his disposal, or whether Bede, Adam, and a Life of Edmund represented the extent of the foreign literary sources available to him at the time.

At first glance Theodoricus' *Historia* seems to display a respectable degree of erudition on the part of the author. Theodoricus was a cleric, and he had access to some version of at least part of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*. The writings of the church fathers were obviously something of a staple among the

early authors of Scandinavian history. The authors of both the *Historia Norwegiae* and *Ágrip* included in their works a scene derived from an episode originally found in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*. Yet there is a difference between Ari's *Íslendingabók* and the first synoptic kings' sagas. While authors of Scandinavian history continued to use primarily religious works of literature such as the writings of the church fathers and the church history of Adam of Bremen as Ari had done, works of a secular nature were consulted with increasing frequency as well. Foreign sources known to Theodoricus in some form include Sallust's *Bellum Catalinae*, Einhard's *Vita Karoli*, and William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*. But Theodoricus' repeated complaints about writing in a country with no books makes it most likely that he only consulted short extracts or notes taken from the works of these authors. The author of the *Historia Norwegiae* made use of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Prophetiae Merlini* and a version of the *Liber de legibus Angliae*. The fact that he consulted a record of the laws of England as well as Geoffrey of Monmouth's fanciful history in addition to the writings of Pope Gregory the Great testifies to a trend which became ever more pronounced throughout the period of the composition of the kings' sagas. Secular literary works were consulted with increasing frequency until finally, during the period of the composition of the great compendia, secular foreign works were preferred by the Icelanders as source materials. This trend away from primarily religious literature and toward more secular source materials is already manifest in the various sources utilized by the authors of the first separate sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson.

The first author of a separate saga of Óláfr Tryggvason, Oddr Snorrason, was a monk at the monastery of Pingeyrar. As might be expected he made use of Gregory the Great's *Libri dialogorum* and Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*. These two religious works were obviously well known in Iceland and had become standard source materials for authors of Scandinavian history by the last decade of the twelfth century. Another religious work that was consulted by Oddr, but which does not seem to have been used by previous historians, was Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini*. Oddr must have considered this *vita* to be an appropriate source for his own work. His and Gunnlaugr's sagas both resemble the genre of the *vita* in that they are accounts of the exceptional life of one man who spent much of his life doing work pleasing to God.

But as popular as Óláfr Tryggvason was among the Icelanders, he was never considered a saint. He was revered as a great missionary king who had helped effect the official conversion of Iceland, but he was also remembered as a great warrior king who had been a successful viking in his youth, and who

ultimately died a dramatic and heroic death while fighting to maintain his kingdom. Oddr needed to incorporate materials which would help him illustrate both sides of this man and to portray not just the missionary, but the great warrior as well. Therefore it is not surprising that Oddr also drew upon more secular historical materials which were known to him. The three remaining identifiable foreign sources used by Oddr, the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, some form of Notker of St. Gall's *De Carolo Magno*, and the *Vita Haraldi*, were works which dealt with great kings, not pious saints. The *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* contains perhaps the strongest religious overtones of the three, but it is still primarily an account of the Christian Emperor Charlemagne's reconquest of sacred territory by means of the sword. It is unclear in what form Notker's description of Charlemagne's approach to Pavia eventually became known to the authors of Óláfr's saga. One can only state that it circulated in Iceland in some form and was, along with the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, part of a general influx of twelfth-century literary accounts of the most famous Christian Emperor of the Middle Ages. This literature served Oddr's desire to glorify his own hero very well. The account of the life of Harold Godwinson was also perfectly suited to Oddr's purposes. Harold's heroic death at the Battle of Hastings was well known in Scandinavia, and the portrait of the brave king, who fought a heroic fight and only succumbed to his enemies because of their overwhelming numbers, matched the Icelanders' conceptions of Óláfr Tryggvason's death too closely to have been neglected by the author of Óláfr's saga.

The trend to draw on both religious and secular works as source materials is also detectable in the sagas of Óláfr Haraldsson. The "Oldest saga" was likely written down at roughly the same time as Oddr's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, or perhaps a little earlier. Therefore it is again no surprise to find traces of Adam of Bremen's history in later redactions of that saga. Unlike Óláfr Tryggvason, however, Óláfr Haraldsson was a saint, and his sanctity was recognized almost immediately after his death. Motifs more closely resembling the European hagiographic tradition, such as the similarity between the many miracles associated with Óláfr's missionary activities and scenes found in works such as the *Vita Leoni* are more prevalent in his saga than in any other. But the trend to draw on secular works of literature from Western Europe continued throughout the evolution of even this saga in the early thirteenth century. "Rauðs þáttur," which is an episode derived from yet another Continental work pertaining to the Emperor Charlemagne, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, was incorporated into *Óláfs saga helga* in a manner roughly analogous to Oddr and Gunnlaugr's use of similar literary materials in their sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason. This comes as no surprise in light of what has

already been stated about the composition of kings' sagas. But we can discern a new trend in the "Oldest saga" based on an examination of two early thirteenth-century redactions of that saga, namely, the *Legendary saga* and Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga*. The foreign literary sources discussed above, such as the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, Notker's *De Carolo Magno*, and even Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, which had been used by other saga authors, were works which had all originally been composed on the Continent. Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* and whichever version of the Life of St. Edmund was known to Ari are two Insular historical sources also known to have been used by Icelandic historians. But it is first in the *Legendary saga* and in Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga* that we find several episodes derived from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* in an Icelandic kings' saga. The presence of these episodes is most likely due to the fact that they were originally included in the no longer extant parts of the "Oldest saga," and the influence of William's history marks the beginning of a new direction for the authors of kings' sagas. Most likely beginning with the "Oldest saga" in the late twelfth century, but then increasingly throughout the early thirteenth century, not just foreign, but distinctly Norman and Anglo-Norman historical sources must have circulated in Iceland, and the Icelandic authors of kings' sagas clearly show a preference for them. This development is especially pronounced in the two Icelandic compendia *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla*.

It might be most accurate to say that not only Norman and Anglo-Norman sources became available in Iceland around the turn of the century, but rather that an increasingly large number of foreign works of all kinds were making their way to Iceland at this time. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, for example, is an English source which first becomes discernable in *Morkinskinna*. Likewise, Ovid's *Remedia amoris* is not a Norman work, but it may have circulated in Iceland for some time prior to the year 1200. The account of Kloengr Þorsteinsson in "Jóns saga" testifies to Ovid's popularity in early twelfth-century Iceland (*Bsk* I, 165; see Chapter 1). Nevertheless, although the late twelfth-century Norwegian Theodoricus had been familiar with at least part of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* as well as with William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, the first kings' sagas written in Iceland, with only the possible exception of the "Oldest saga," do not show any traces of Norman or Anglo-Norman influence. It is first with the composition of *Morkinskinna* ca. 1220 that Norman source material suddenly appears in the Icelandic kings' sagas. To judge by the contents of the great compendia, Icelandic saga authors made increasing use of the new works at their disposal and considered them to be authoritative. Between 1220 and 1235 the authors of *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* can be shown to have

consulted versions of the Norman *Genealogia regum Anglie*, William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, Wace's *Roman de Brut*, and either Orderic Vitalis' *Ecclesiastical History* or William of Poitiers' *Gesta Guillelmi ducis Normannorum et regis Anglorum*. Whether the sudden abundance of so much Norman historical material in Iceland at this time can be ascribed to the Icelanders' high regard for a people they considered to be distant relatives, or whether it was due to changing economic and social conditions in Northern and Western Europe around the year 1200, there can be no doubt that from the beginning of the thirteenth century Norman and Anglo-Norman literary influence was profound and left an unmistakable mark on the content of the Icelandic kings' sagas.

Yet it would be a mistake to imagine that Icelandic authors' use of foreign sources was unique to the genre of the kings' sagas. Scholars have identified motifs derived from foreign sources in the family sagas as well. Einar Ól. Sveinsson noticed the importance of Gregory's *Libri dialogorum* for the composition of *Njáls saga*. In particular, Flosi's dream in *Njáls saga*, which foretells the deaths of several prominent men (*ÍF* 7, 346–48), is clearly derived from a similar anecdote related by Gregory in the *Dialogues*. According to Gregory, one night the monk Anastasius heard the names of seven brother monks called out from a distance. There was a pause, and then an eighth name was called. Shortly thereafter all seven monks died, and after an interval, the eighth monk died as well (*Dialogues* 72). The incident in *Njáls saga* parallels the anecdote related by Gregory too closely to be a coincidence (Einar Ól. Sveinsson 1959, 15). Additionally, Régis Boyer has pointed out that an episode in *Egils saga*, in which Egill carves runes on a drinking horn containing poisoned beer causing the horn to burst (*ÍF* 2, 109) is also likely derived from Gregory's *Dialogues* (Boyer 1971, 18). According to Gregory, Saint Benedict once saved himself from a poisoned cup of wine by making the sign of the cross in the direction of the proffered vessel (*Dialogues* 142). The present study of the foreign sources used by the authors of kings' sagas has emphasized the importance of Gregory's *Dialogues* for this genre, but it also supports Einar Ól. Sveinsson's and Régis Boyer's findings concerning Gregory's importance for the family sagas. If the written version of *Njáls saga* were composed sometime in the mid thirteenth century, as Einar Ól. Sveinsson believed (*ÍF* 7, lxix), it is tempting to speculate that it was the authors of the early kings' sagas who first legitimized for later saga authors the practice of reworking literary motifs found in foreign sources in their own works.

A case can be made that foreign influence on the sagas is so pervasive as to be almost undetectable. Carol Clover has argued that the form of all thirteenth-century Icelandic prose sagas was to some extent originally derived

from Western European models. According to Clover many of the literary techniques which characterize the saga genre, such as transitional phrases employed by the author, techniques for simultaneous narration of contemporary events taking place in different locations, and the literary devices of "stranding" and "interlacing" which enable an author to weave many various recurring subplots at intervals throughout the text into something resembling a literary tapestry, were techniques adopted by Icelanders from Western European works of history and prose literature (Clover 1982; 1985, 250–53). Clover considers the influence of various Western European aesthetic principles for literature to have been so pervasive as to have influenced all the genres of written Icelandic sagas and even to have provided the Icelanders with an organizational principle behind the composition of larger saga compilations such as *Flateyjarbók* (Clover 1982, 81–85).

In his analysis of the prologues to some of the earliest known works of Icelandic literature such as the *First Grammatical Treatise*, Ari's *Íslendingabók*, Oddr's *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, and several of the bishops' sagas Sverrir Tómasson agrees with Clover's opinion regarding the importance of Western European literary models for early Icelandic literature. Sverrir argues that the structure and the rhetorical devices contained in early Icelandic prologues are reflexes of the principles of Latin grammar and rhetoric as outlined by early medieval authors such as Isidor, Bede, and Alcuin. Sometimes Icelandic authors' debt to Latin literary conventions is obvious, such as at the beginning of "Þorláks saga helga hin yngri" which in the manuscript begins with the Latin phrase "Incipit prologus" (*Bsk* I, 263). Latin rhetorical devices are less striking when they appear in the vernacular, but Sverrir believes they are present in some form in many early works of Icelandic literature (Sverrir Tómasson 1988, 51–54, 60, 64–69).

The influence of Western European literature on the form of the written sagas as we know them was both fundamental and decisive. This influence could take the form of borrowing motifs and anecdotes from individual works of Western European literature, as is the case with the importance of Gregory's *Dialogues* to the composition of kings' sagas, *Egils saga*, and *Njáls saga*. In other instances the importance of foreign literary models might simply have been to provide Icelandic authors with commonly acknowledged aesthetic principles for literary composition. The present study has aimed at identifying which foreign sources were used by successive waves of kings' saga authors, and it has shown that the stock of foreign literary materials in Iceland grew over the course of time. Changing literary tastes among the Icelanders, most likely as a direct result of increasingly available source materials, had profound effects on the form and content of subsequent works of Icelandic literature.

In conjunction with the increase in foreign sources which gradually became known to the Icelanders there was an unmistakable evolution in the form of the kings' sagas. We know very little about the length, form, and content of the first works dealing with the Norwegian kings by Sæmundr and Ari. However, Ari's preoccupation with the exact chronology and dating of specifically Icelandic historical events as recorded in his *Íslendingabók* most closely recalls the genre of a chronicle or an annal (Ólafía Einarsdóttir 1964, 3, 33–6). The synoptic histories *Historia Norwegia*, *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium*, and *Ágrip* describe and carefully date the most salient events known to have transpired during the reigns of various Norwegian kings. In this respect they also closely resemble the genre of the annal or chronicle.

The form of the first independent sagas composed in Iceland, Oddr and Gunnlaugr's sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason and the "Oldest saga St. Óláfr Haraldsson," is very different from that of the synoptic histories. These works are individual accounts of the life of one man who, among other things, is depicted as having spent most of his life engaged in furthering Christianity. These first separate sagas can perhaps most accurately be thought of as Icelandic versions of the genre of the *vita*. This comparison is supported by the fact that, in the best hagiographic tradition, at least two of these first three sagas are known to have been written by monks, and they originally wrote them in Latin, the language most common to that particular genre.

When one looks at the great compendia, *Morkinskinna*, *Fagrskinna*, and *Heimskringla* it is obvious that the preferred form for compiling kings' sagas changed again. Carol Clover explains the appearance of kings' saga compendia as an Icelandic imitation of the cyclic form of literary composition surrounding figures such as Guillaume d'Orange and later the Arthurian knights that took place on the Continent in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. According to Clover compilers of the Continental cycles and the compilers of kings' saga compendia were ostensibly all motivated to establish a comprehensive, encyclopedic body of literature surrounding a small group of exceptional individuals such as the members of Guillaume's family, Arthur's knights, or the kings of Norway (Clover 1982, 54–7).

Clover might be correct, but when one considers the very pronounced and sudden influence of longer Norman and Anglo-Norman historical works on *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* another explanation for this sudden change in the form of the kings' sagas presents itself. Rather than seeking the models for the large Icelandic compendia among the Continental cyclic compositions, it seems at least as likely that the authors of kings' sagas in the first half of the thirteenth century wrote in deliberate imitation of the longer "Gesta regum," the lengthy histories of an entire people which had become so

popular in twelfth-century Western Europe. Works such as William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* were more or less factually based histories of an entire people under their various kings. Surely the genre of the "Gesta regum" was more appropriate to what can be deduced about the intentions of Icelandic compilers of kings' sagas than were literary accounts of quasi-fictional heroes. Clover's explanation goes a long way toward explaining the origin of a compilation such as *Piðreks saga*, but in the case of the kings' sagas a more likely scenario is that impressive monuments of Western European historiography such as William's *Gesta regum* functioned as a challenge and a catalyst to the Icelandic historians. It is easy to imagine Icelanders who felt themselves to be sufficiently educated and informed about their own past, while at the same time confidently possessing their characteristic skill at storytelling, setting out to write alternative histories that were every bit as informative, worthwhile, and entertaining as those originating in the British Isles and on the Continent.

It is unfortunate that it is so difficult to outline the origin and growth of saga literature in Iceland. But through an analysis of the genre of the kings' sagas we can gain some insight into the early period of saga writing. Whereas the authors of most of the family sagas remain anonymous, several early authors of kings' sagas can be identified with relative certainty, as can the time and place where they composed their works. It is true that our knowledge is limited to the relatively well documented burst of early literary activity among the monks at Pingeyrar, and, if we accept his authorship of *Heimskringla*, to what is known about the later life of Snorri Sturluson. But it is possible to build upon this knowledge and draw further conclusions about the origins of the Icelandic sagas.

We know that foreign literary works played an important role in providing learned Icelanders with models for successful literary composition. Therefore it is worthwhile to investigate what is known about centers for the dissemination of learning in Iceland. Gizurr Ísleifsson (d. 1118) founded a cathedral school at Skálholt, Sæmundr Sigfússon (d. 1133) established some sort of library at Oddi, and Jón Ögmundarson (d. 1121) is known to have founded a school at the seat of his bishopric at Hólar. However, none of these institutions had any sort of monopoly on education in Iceland. Ari Þorgilsson, the future author of *Íslendingabók* and Iceland's first great historian was fostered by Hallr Þórarinnsson in Haukadalr between the years 1074–1089 together with Teitr Ísleifsson, the younger brother of Bishop Gizurr. It was Teitr who educated Ari, and there is no mention in the sagas of Ari attending a school of any kind. Teitr, however, is praised in "Jóns saga" as a great teacher (*Bsk* I, 153; *Ísl* v–vii). Thus we see that Icelandic authors and

teachers did not have to be physically located at one of these centers in order to impart learning or to compose works of literature. Jón Ögmundarson's efforts at educating Icelanders were highly successful, and many of his former students eventually became monks and abbots at the Pingeyrar monastery. But again we see that the individual centers of education and literary activity in Iceland were by no means permanent or stationary. Although the bishops' sagas emphatically praise the quality of Jón's school at Hólar, it was at Pingeyrar and not Hólar that the monks Oddr, Gunnlaugr, and their abbot Karl Jónsson, the author of *Sverris saga*, wrote the first Icelandic kings' sagas.

Pingeyrar was just one monastery out of several in Iceland and therefore, one would expect, of much less literary importance than the cathedral schools of Hólar and Skálholt. But an analysis of the foreign sources used by the monks of Pingeyrar for the sagas of Óláfr Tryggvason shows that at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries there was a surprising degree of intellectual sophistication to be found there. Not only was this small monastery in Northern Iceland equipped with a library, but it must have been a very good one at that, and one that contained a surprisingly diverse spectrum of literature. Works present in that library range from standard religious works such as Gregory the Great's *Libri dialogorum*, Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* and Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* to more secular works such as the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*. Gunnlaugr's later translation of the *Prophetiae Merlini* into the Icelandic "Melínussþá" makes it likely that the library also contained some version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannie*, but Geoffrey's work was very popular throughout Western Europe and its presence there is not surprising. More interestingly, the study of the foreign sources used by the authors of the kings' sagas has also shown that both Oddr and Gunnlaugr knew and made use of the *Vita Harald*, of which only one text is extant today. Thus we can conclude that this work either once circulated so widely throughout Western Europe that it even found its way to an obscure monastery in Northern Iceland, a scenario which is contradicted by the lack of any other surviving exemplar of the work, or we must conclude that the collection of books at the Pingeyrar monastic library was better and much more complete than scholars have previously believed.

And yet these observations raise a host of new questions. Were the works found in the Pingeyrar monastery originally brought there by travelers abroad such as abbot Karl Jónsson who returned to Pingeyrar from Norway in 1189, or were they largely copies of works which were also found in the school at Hólar? Was the Pingeyrar monastery unique in the quality of its library, or was it representative of a number of late twelfth-century Icelandic religious

institutions? Abbot Nikólás Bergsson of the monastery of Munkaþverá, also located in Northern Iceland, wrote his *Leiðarvísur og borgaskipun* there between 1155 and 1158. This raises the question whether his literary efforts were unique among the monks of that monastery. Theodore M. Andersson believes not and has made a case for the importance of Munkaþverá for the early production of literature in the twelfth century in addition to the better known literary center at Þingeyrar (Andersson and Gade 2000, 66–72; Andersson 1994; see below).

But it would be a mistake to make a habit of looking only to the religious institutions of Iceland as centers of literary production. There had been a library at Oddi since the days of Sæmundr, and this library was in the care of Jón Loptsson when he fostered the young Snorri Sturluson, who eventually compiled *Heimskringla* at his private residence at Reykjaholt. To judge by the foreign sources found in *Heimskringla*, Snorri must have possessed a formidable library himself. Although Snorri used *Morkinskinna* as a source, he also altered the text as he saw fit. In particular Snorri replaced material from the Continental Norman version of the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings which had previously been used by the author of *Morkinskinna* with details from William of Malmesbury's Anglo-Norman account. Snorri almost certainly had a version of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, as well as genealogies of the kings of England at his disposal at Reykjaholt, but did he possess the Continental Norman histories as well? Whoever authored *Morkinskinna* certainly had access to them, but it is an open question whether Snorri and the author of *Morkinskinna* incorporated either Continental Norman or Anglo-Norman source materials simply because they were the only sources which were available at the particular time and place they wrote, or whether they knew both but preferred their respective versions of the events in question. It is only certain that all these accounts were present somewhere in Iceland by 1235 at the latest.

It is unfortunate that we do not know where *Morkinskinna* was composed. Eivind Kválen believed it was composed in the North of Iceland in the general area around Eyjafjörðr. He based this conclusion on the fact that, among the Icelanders who figure prominently in many of the interpolated þættir in *Morkinskinna*, many can be shown to have come from this area (Kválen 1925, 46–51). Theodore M. Andersson also believes *Morkinskinna* to be the product of the literary traditions of Eyjafjörðr, and he associates the text with the monastery at Munkaþverá. Andersson bases his case on prominent Icelanders who are known to have lived in this area and were either patrons or inmates of the monastery. Many of these people have either been associated with various other early Icelandic works of literature themselves, or else are

known to have been related to Icelanders who were (Andersson 1994). All hypotheses about the origin of this text must be speculative to some degree, but Andersson's scenario is certainly possible, especially in conjunction with Kválen's earlier observations. His argument would carry more weight if there were any mention of a library having existed at Munkaþverá. The presence of Continental Norman texts is a feature of *Morkinskinna* which demands to be accounted for.

Kari Ellen Gade has made a case for Styrmir Kárason ("the wise") having authored *Morkinskinna* prior to his becoming a member of the monastic community at Viðey in 1235. Gade bases her argument on the generally acknowledged fact of Styrmir's authorship of *Harðar saga*. Not only does this identify Styrmir as a writer of sagas, but there are textual correspondences between this saga and parts of *Morkinskinna*. Styrmir would thus have composed *Morkinskinna* in south-western Iceland. Several facts support Gade's argument. Styrmir was a close friend of Snorri Sturluson, and both Styrmir and Snorri signed the founding charter of Viðey (see Note 1). When one considers what is known about Snorri and his use of foreign sources in the compilation of *Heimskringla*, it is easy to picture Styrmir having composed *Morkinskinna*, perhaps with the help of his friend Snorri's library at Reykjaholt (Gade Unpublished MS. 1998). It is also significant that Styrmir's father is generally considered to have been Kári Rúnólfsson, the abbot of Þingeyrar from 1181 to 1187. A resolution of the debate over the place of composition of *Morkinskinna* could have two possible outcomes. One would be to underscore the importance of the various monastic houses in Iceland as repositories of literary works brought to Iceland from Western Europe as exemplified by Þingeyrar and Munkaþverá. The other would be to emphasize the importance of prominent and talented secular individuals such as pre-Viðey Styrmir and Snorri for the transmission of originally Latin literature from the Continent and England.

The origin of the first kings' sagas was the result of a fortunate combination of both these factors. The monastic houses of Iceland served the all important function of facilitating the physical transmission of works of literature from the libraries of Western Europe to libraries in Iceland. The role of pilgri-ming monks who called upon and stayed with their monastic brethren on their way to and from the pilgrimage sites of Western Europe was of crucial importance to the growth of learning and the composition of literature in Iceland. The learned Christian tradition practiced within the confines of Icelandic monasteries then made possible the transmission of the literature and knowledge originally recorded in Latin to the general population of Iceland. That secular individuals later played a prominent role in the production

of kings' sagas served both to remove the sagas from the confines of a cloister and to ensure that the vernacular was the preferred language of their composition. The monastic and secular authors of the kings' sagas thus both helped bring the entire population of Iceland more firmly into the sphere of Western European culture and intellectual accomplishments. They also gave to the descendants of those original bearers of Western European culture a genre of literature which, eight hundred years later, is still as impressive and delightful to read as it is unique in the Western intellectual tradition.

Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

Note 1

Benedictine and Augustinian monasteries, schools, and teachers in Iceland

Northern Quarter:

1. Hólar—Cathedral school founded in 1106 by Bishop Jón Ögmundarson.
2. Þingeyrar—Benedictine (until 1300: Cistercian reform monastery). Founded in 1133 by Bishop Jón Ögmundarson. The monks there maintained close relations with Hólar throughout the 12th century.
3. Saurbær í Eyjafirði—probably Augustinian. Only existed a short while around 1200.
4. Munkaþverá—Benedictine. Located by Eyjafjörður and founded by Björn Gilsson, Bishop of Hólar in 1155.

Southern Quarter:

1. Skálholt—Cathedral school founded by Bishop Gizurr Ísleifsson ca. 1083.
2. Kirkjubær á Síðu—Benedictine convent for nuns founded in 1186.
3. Þykkvibær—Augustinian. Founded in 1168.
4. Viðey—Augustinian until 1344. Founded near Reykjavík in 1226 by Snorri Sturluson and Þorvaldr Gizurarson.

Western Quarter:

1. Flatey—Augustinian. Founded in 1172. Moved in 1184 to Helgafell.
2. Helgafell—Founded in 1184.
3. Hítardalur—probably Benedictine and existed ca. 1168–1201. Only the names of two abbots are known from the history of this monastery.
4. Bær í Borgarfirði (before 1049) probably Benedictine. Location of the missionary Bishop Rudolf (Hróðólfr), probably an Englishman.

Note 2

Examples of medieval historians' professed treatment of source materials

1. "Huc usque uenerabilis Baldrici prosecutus sum uestigia, et ueracem feci narrationem de famosa Christi militia, quæ iuuante Deo insigniter debellauit in Eois partibus ethnicorum examina. Multis in locis operi nostro inserui eadem uerba sophistæ, sicut depromserat ipse, non ausus aliter eius dicta propalare, quæ non credebam me posse emendare. Quædam tamen ne prolixitas taxationis nostræ fastidio legentes oneraret adbreuiando recidi, nonnulla uero posteritati notificanda quæ tacuerat ueraciter adieci, prout ab his qui laboribus et periculis interfuerunt edidici" (Ordericus Vitalis, *OVV*, 188–89).
 ("Up to now I have followed the footsteps of the venerable Baudry, and have given a true account of the glorious army of Christ which, with God's help, nobly defeated the swarms of infidels in the eastern lands. In many parts of my work I have copied the very words of this learned man, just as he wrote them, not daring to promulgate his work in any other way, since I did not believe I could improve upon them. But I have abbreviated some passages, for fear that the length of my account might weary my readers, and I have added a few things not mentioned by him, for the benefit of posterity, truthfully, just as I learnt them from men who took part in these toils and dangers" [translation by Chibnall *OVV*, 188–89].)
2. "Digressiones etiam more antiquorum chronographorum non inutiles, ut arbitramur, ad delectandum animum lectoris locis competentibus adiunximus" (Theodoricus, *MHN* 4).
 ("Yet we judge digressions according to the custom of the ancient historians not to be useless, and we have added them in appropriate places for pleasing the intellect of our reader.")

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

Note 1

Theodoricus' *Historia* and Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni*

Theodoricus' first portent:

Primum prodigium fuit pons Magontiæ, ultra Rhenum firmiter constructus, ita ut perpetuo durare putaretur, per octo annos fabricatus: cumque jam esset consummatus, contracta nube super pontem eo ipso die fulmen emicuit totumque combussit, ita ut nec hastula quidem super aquam remaneret [*MHN* 59]).

(The first portent was the bridge at Mainz, strongly built across the Rhine, so that it was believed it would last forever. It was built over the course of eight years, and when it had at last been completed, a cloud gathered over the bridge, and on that same day a bolt of lightning sprang forth and burned the entire bridge, so that nothing but the piles remained above [the] water.)

Einhard:

Item pons Rheni apud Mogontiacum, quem ipse per decem annos ingenti labore et opere mirabili de ligno ita construxit, ut perenniter durare posse videretur, ita tribus horis fortuitu incendio conflagrauit, ut, praeter quod aqua tegebatur, ne una quidem hastula ex eo remaneret (*VK* 104–6).

(The wooden bridge across the Rhine at Mainz, which had taken ten years of hard work to build and which was so cleverly constructed that it seemed as if it would last forever, this bridge accidentally caught fire and burnt to ashes in three hours, so that not a single plank remained except what was under water [*VK* 105–7].)

Theodoricus' second portent:

Secundum fuit porticus ingens Aquisgrani inter basilicam et palatium, quæ cum ipse imperator die dominica superiorem ecclesiam vellet intrare, ante pedes ejus tota usque ad terram collapsa est (*MHN* 59).

(The second [portent] was the huge Aquisgrani portico [which lay] between the cathedral and the palace, which, on a holy day when the emperor wanted to enter the larger church, completely collapsed to the ground [and fell] before his feet.)

Einhard:

Porticus, quam inter basilicam et regiam operosa mole construxerat, die ascensionis Domini subita ruina usque ad fundamenta conlapsa (*VK* 104).

(On Ascension Day the portico between the cathedral and the palace which had been built with immense effort suddenly came crashing down in complete ruin [*VK* 105].)

Theodoricus' third portent:

Tertium fuit nomen ipsius principis aureis literis in summitate maceriæ conscriptum adeo magnis, ut in pavimento quis stans facillime legere posset; quod ultimo ætatis suæ anno ita deletum fuit, ut nullo modo legi posset (*MHN* 59–60).

(The third [portent] was [that] the name of that same emperor had been written on the highest point of a wall in gold letters so large, that anyone who was standing on the ground was easily able to read [it]. But in the last year of his life, it had faded to such a point, that it could no longer be read.)

Einhard:

Erat in eadem basilica in margine coronæ, quæ inter superiores et inferiores arcus interiorem aedis partem ambiebat, epigramma sinopide scriptum, continens, quis auctor esset eiusdem templi, cuius in extremo versu legebatur: KAROLVS PRINCEPS. Notatum est a quibusdam eodem quo decessit anno paucis ante mortem mensibus eas quæ PRINCEPS exprimebant litteras ita esse deletas ut penitus non apparerent (*VK* 106).

(In the same basilica there was an inscription written in red ochre naming its builder and running along the edge of the circular space which surrounds the interior part of the building between the upper and lower arches. Its last words read: "KAROLUS PRINCEPS." Several people noticed that during the last years of his life, only a few months before he died, the letters of the word "Princeps" had become so blurred that they could hardly be deciphered [*VK* 107].)

Theodoricus' fourth omen:

Quantum fuit signum præfigurans mortem ipsius, quod cum equitaret sereno die ferens lanceam manu, fulgur cecidit ante pedes equi, una cum rege ipsum dejiciens, lancea quoque de manu ejus longe projecta est, cinguli rupti, imperator tamen sine læsione permansit (*MHN* 60).

(The fourth portent foretelling his death was that which [happened] when [he was] riding on a clear day holding a lance in his hand. Lightning fell before the feet of his horse, throwing [it] together with the king [to the ground]. The lance was also thrown a great distance from his hand, [and his] belts burst. The emperor, however, remained uninjured.)

Einhard:

Subito equus, quem sedebat, capite deorsum merso decidit eumque tam graviter ad terram elisit, ut, fibula sagi rupta balteoque gladii dissipato, a festinantibus qui aderant ministris exarmatus et sine amiculo levaretur. Iaculum etiam, quod tunc forte manu tenebat, ita elapsus est, ut viginti vel eo amplius pedum spatio longe iaceret (*VK* 106).

(His horse suddenly fell headfirst and threw him to the ground so violently that the clasp on his cloak broke and his sword belt burst. The attendants who were near him and rushed to his aid helped him up without his weapons and cloak. The lance which he had been holding tightly in his hand was thrown a distance of more than twenty feet [*VK* 107].)

Both Theodoricus and Einhard bring their accounts of the portents of Charlamagne's death to a close by stating that he was untroubled by them.

Theodoricus writes:

Licet itaque Carolus certissime cognosceret, hæc signa suam quodammodo proloqui mortem, tamen constantia virili et magnitudine animi cuncta dissimulaverat (*MHN* 60).

(Thus although Charles most certainly knew [that] in this way these signs presaged his own death, [he] nevertheless, with manly firmness and [with] the greatness of his soul, ignored them all.)

Einhard observed that:

Sed superiora omnia sic aut dissimulavit aut sprexit, acsi nihil horum ad res suas quolibet modo pertineret (*VK* 106).

(But Charles took no notice of these omens; in any case he acted as if they had nothing whatever to do with him [*VK* 107].)

Note 2

Historia Norwegiæ and Honorius' *Imago mundi* (emphasis added)

Historia Norwegiæ

Dixit namque Solinus in libro suo, quem de mundi mirabilibus scripsit, **abyssum profundissimam in ipsa terra** existere (unde *scriptum est: rupti sunt fontes abyssi*

magnæ), **juxta** quam **speluncas** propatulas ventos aquatica spiratione conceptos in se continere, **qui** sunt **spiritus procellarum**. Hi vero venti sua spiratione per occultos terræ meatus **aquas maris** ad se contrahunt et in thesauros **abyssi** recondunt, quas iterum eadem vi a se repellunt, unde æstus et torrentes voraginumque vertigines excitantur. Inde etiam **terræ motus** et variæ vaporum exustionumque emissiones contingunt; quidam ventorum enim flatus terrenis buccis inclusi dum erumpere gliscunt, **terræ** molem **horribili fremore** conquassant **eamque trepidare** cogunt. Sic nimirum spiritu ventorum introrsum cum igne concertante et etiam in medio pelago prærupto profundo fumigeri vapores sulfureique ignes emergi cernuntur. Simili modo quod **in terra tremor**, in nube **tonitrum**, **hic hiatus**, ibi fulgur creditur (*MHN* 95–6).

Honorius' *Imago mundi*

41. . . . Est in **terra abyssus profundissima**, de qua **scribitur: Rupti sunt fontes abyssi magne**. **Iuxta** hanc sunt cavernosa loca, et **speluncæ** latè patententes. In his, venti de spiramine aquarum concipiuntur, **qui** etiam **spiritus procellarum** dicuntur. Et hi suo spiramine **aquas maris** per patententes terrarum cavernas introrsus in **abyssum** attrahunt, et ea exundante iterum magno impetu repellunt.

42. De his ventis fit etiam **terræ motus**. Nam venti concavis locis inclusi dum erumpere gestiunt, **terram horribili fremore** concutiunt, **eamque tremere faciunt** (n. 3).

43. . . . Hoc est autem **in terra tremor**, quod in nube **tonitruum**. **Hic hiatus** quod ibi fulmen (*HA* 68–9).

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

Note 1

The Prologues to Adam's history and the *Historia Norwegiæ* (emphasis added)

Adam (emphasis added):

ne proselitus et advena tanti **muneris beneficio ingratus existerem**.

HN (emphasis added):

ne [ingratu]s crebrorum **munerum beneficiis existam**.

Adam:

quod **nec laudari** cupio **ut historicus**, **nec** improbari metuo **ut falsidicus**.

HN:

Neque enim **laudis** avidus **ut chronographus** existo **neque** vituperii stimulos **ut falsidicus** exhorreo.

Adam:

pleraque omnia seniorum, quibus res nota est, traditione didici.

HN:

sed **in omnibus seniorum** assertiones secutus.

Note 2

Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*

Part 1:

A. Gregory's text reads as follows:

XIII. Gothorum namque temporibus, cum rex eorum Totila sanctum uirum prophetiae habere spiritum audisset, ad eius monasterium pergens, paulo longius substitit, eique se uenturum esse nuntiavit. Cui dum protinus mandatum de monasterio fuisset, ut ueniret, ipse, sicut perfidae mentis fuit, an uir Domini prophetiae spiritum haberet, explorare conatus est. Quidam uero ejus spatarius Riggo dicebatur, cui calciamenta sua praebuit, eumque indui regalibus uestibus fecit, quem quasi in persona sua pergere ad Dei hominem praecepit. In cuius obsequio tres, qui sibi prae caeteris adhaerere consueuerant, comites misit, scilicet, Vult, Ruderic, et Blidin, ut ante serui Dei oculos ipsum esse regem Totilam simulantes, eius lateri obambulant. Cui alia quoque obsequia atque spatarios praebuit, ut tam ex eisdem obsequiis, quam ex purpureis vestibus rex esse putaretur.

2. Cumque idem Riggo decoratus vestibus, obsequentum frequentia comitatus, monasterium fuisset ingressus, vir Dei eminens sedebat. Quem venientem conspiciens, cum iam ab eo audiri potuisset, clamavit, dicens: "Pone, fili, pone hoc quod portas. Non est tuum." Qui Riggo protinus in terram cecedit, et quia tanto viro inludere praesumpsisset, expavit, omnesque, qui cum eo ad Dei hominem ueniebant, terrae consternati sunt. Surgentes autem, ad eum propinquare minime praesumpserunt, sed ad suum regem reuersi, nuntiauerunt trepidi in quanta velocitate fuerant deprehensi.

XV. Tunc per se isdem Totila ad Dei hominem accessit. Quem cum longe sedentem cerneret, non ausus accedere, sese in terram dedit. Cui dum uir Dei bis et ter diceret: "Surge," sed ipse ante eum erigi de terra non auderet, Benedictus, Jesu Christi Domini famulus, per semetipsum dignatus est accedere ad regem prostratum. Quem de terra leuauit, de suis actibus increpauit, atque in paucis sermonibus cuncta quae illi erant uentura praenuntiavit, dicens: "Multa mala facis, multa fecisti. Iam aliquando ab iniquitate conpescere. Et quidem Romam ingressurus es, mare transiturus, nouem annis regnas; decimo morieris."

2. Quibus auditis, rex uehementer territus, oratione petita, recessit, atque ex illo iam tempore minus crudelis fuit. Cum non multo post Romam adiit, ad Siciliam perrexit, anno autem regni sui decimo omnipotentis Dei iudicio regnum cum vita perdidit (Gregory, *Dialogues*, II, 14–15, pp. 180–184).

(XIII. It was in the time of the Goths, when their king, Totila, heard that a holy man possessed the spirit of prophecy. Going to his monastery [Totila] stopped a small distance away, and announced that he was going to go to him. When permission was immediately given to him by the monastery, that he might come, he, since he was of a treacherous mind, [doubted] whether a man of God

might have the spirit of prophecy, and he tried to find out. He gave to his sword bearer, a man named Riggo, his own shoes, and had him put on the royal vestments, and [he] directed him to go to the man of God, as if [it] were he himself. He sent three companions into his company, who had been particularly close to him, namely Vult, Ruderic and Blidin. So that they would resemble that same king Totila in the presence of the servant of God, they were to walk beside him. He ordered that there should also be other attendants and swordbearers given to him, so that by means of these other attendants, it would be thought that it was the king wearing the purple robes.

2. And when Riggo was decorated in the robes, the large retinue entered the compliant monastery, [and found] the eminent man of God sitting down. Seeing him approaching, [Benedict] then spoke when he could be heard, and cried out, saying: "Put down, son, put down what you are wearing. It is not yours." Then Riggo immediately fell to the ground, and because he had intended to deceive such a great man, he became very frightened. And all who had come with him to the man of God, fell to the ground. When they got up however, they did not presume to approach him, but returned to the king, and excitedly and quickly announced that they had been detected.

XV. Totila immediately went to the man of God himself. When he saw him sitting at a great distance, he did not dare to approach, but prostrated himself. Then the man of God said to him two or three times: "Arise." But he did not dare to raise himself from the ground before him. Benedict, the servant of Jesus Christ, deigned to approach the prostrate king, whom he raised from the ground, and rebuked him for his deeds. And he foretold in a few words all those things which were going to happen to him. "You are doing many evil things, and you have done many evil things. At last it is now time to desist from doing evil. You are going to enter Rome and cross the sea. You will rule for nine years, and you will die in the tenth."

2. When the king heard these things, he was very frightened. He left after this conversation, which he had sought, and from this time on, he was less cruel. Not long after this, he approached Rome, crossed to Sicily, and in the tenth year of his reign, lost his life according to the judgment of God.)

B. *Heimskringla* states:

Óláfr Tryggvason, þá er hann lá í Syllingum, spurði hann, at þar í eyjunni var spámaðr nokkurr, sá er sagði fyrir óorðna hluti, ok þótti mǫrgum mǫnnum þat mjök eptir ganga. Gerðisk Óláfi forvitni á at reyna spádóm manns þess. Hann sendi þann af mǫnnum sínum, er fríðastr var ok mestr, ok bjó hann sem vegligast ok bað hann segja, at hann væri konungr, því at Óláfr var þá frægr orðinn af því umöll lönd, at hann var fríðari ok gǫfugligri ok meiri en allir menn aðrir. En síðan er hann fór ór Garðaríki, hafði hann eigi meira af nafni sínu en kallaði sik Óla ok kvazk vera gerzkr. En er sendimaðr kom til spámannsins ok sagðisk vera konungr, þá fékk hann þessi andsvör: "Ekki ertu konungr, en þat er ráð mitt, at þu sér trúr konungi þínum." Ekki sagði hann fleira þessum manni. Fór

sendimaðr aptr ok segir Óláfi, ok fýsti Ólaf þess at meirr at finna þenna mann, er hann heyrði slík andsvör hans, ok tók nú ífa af honum, at hann væri eigi spámaðr. Fór þá Óláfr á hans fund ok átti tal við hann ok spurði eptir, hvat spámaðr segði Óláfi fyrir, hvernug honum myndi ganga til ríkis eða annarrar hamingju. Einsetumaðrinn svaraði með helgum spádómi: “Þú munt verða ágætr konungr ok ágæt verk vinna. Þú munt mörpum mörnum til trúar koma ok skírnar, muntu bæði þér hjálpa í því ok mörpum öðrum. Ok til þess at þú efisk eigi um þessi mín andsvör, þá máttu þat til marks hafa: Þú munt við skip þín svikum mæta ok flokkum, ok mun á bardaga reitask, ok muntu týna nokkuru liði ok sjálf sár fá ok muntu af því sári banvænn vera ok á skildi til skips borinn, en af þessu sári muntu heill verða innan sjau náttu ok brátt við skírn taka” (*Hkr* I, 266–7).

(When Óláfr Tryggvason was lying in the Scilly islands, he learned that there was a certain prophet on the island who could foretell the future, and it seemed to many men to come true. Óláfr became curious [and decided] to test this man's [gift of] prophesy. He sent one of his men, who was the largest and most handsome, and dressed him most magnificently. He told him to say that he was the king, because Óláfr had then become famous for this through all the lands, that he was more handsome and noble-looking and larger than all other men. And after he had traveled out of Russia, he had ceased to use his own name, but called himself Óli and said he was Russian. But when the messenger came to the prophet and said he was the king, then he received this answer: “You are not the king, but this is my advice, that you be loyal to your king.” He did not say anything more to this man. The messenger went back and told Óláfr, and Óláfr desired all the more to meet this man, when he heard him answer in this way, and all doubt left him, that he might not be a [true] prophet. Óláfr then went to meet with him, and he spoke with him and inquired what the prophet might foretell for Óláfr; whether he might gain a kingdom or other good fortune. The hermit answered with [this] holy prophesy: “You will become a great king and do great deeds. You will bring many men to the faith and to baptism, and you will help both yourself and many others in this way. And so that you do not doubt my answers, you shall have this as a sign: You will meet with treachery and a band of men at your ships, and there will be a fight, and you will lose some of your men and yourself be wounded. And you will be near death from this wound and carried to your ship on your shield. But you will be healed from this wound in seven nights and soon [thereafter] will receive baptism.”)

Part 2:

A. Gregory writes:

3. Quadam uero die Iudaeus quidam, ex Campaniae partibus Romam ueniens, Appiae carpebat iter. Qui ad Fundanum cliuum perueniens, cum iam diem uesperescere cerneret et quo declinare posset minime repperiret, iuxta Apollinis templum fuit ibique se ad manendum contulit. Qui ipsum loci illius

sacrilegium pertimescens, quamuis fidem crucis minime haberet, signo tamen se crucis munire curauit.

4. Nocte autem media, ipso solitudinis pauore turbatus, peruigil iacebat, et repente conspiciens uidit malignorum spirituum turbam quasi in obsequium cuiusdam postestatis praecire, eum uero qui ceteris praecerat in eiusdem gremio loci consedissee. Qui coepit singulorum spirituum obsequentium sibi causas actusque discutere, quatenus unusquisque quantum nequitiae egisset inueniret.

5. Cumque singuli spiritus ad inquisitionem eius exponerent, quid operati contra bonos fuissent, unus in medio prosiliuit, qui in Andreae episcopi animum per speciem sanctimonialis feminae, quae in episcopio eius habitabat, quantam temptationem carnis conmouisset aperuit. Cum uero hoc malignus qui praecerat spiritus inhiante audiret, et tantum sibi factum lucrum grande crederet, quanto sanctioris uiri animam ad lapsum perditionis inclinaret, ille spiritus, qui hanc eadem fatebatur, adiunxit quia usque ad hoc quoque die praeterito uespertina hora eius mentem traxerat, ut in terga eiusdem sanctimonialis feminae blandiens alapam daret. Tunc malignus spiritus atque humani generis antiquus inimicus exhortatus hunc blande est, ut perficeret quod coepisset, quatenus ruinae illius singularem inter ceteros palmam teneret.

6. Cumque Iudaeus qui aduenerat hoc uigilans cerneret, et magnae formidinis anxietate palpitaret, ab eodem spiritu, qui cunctis illic obsequentibus praecerat, iussum est, ut requirerent quisnam esset ille qui iacere in templo eodem praesumpsisset. Quem maligni spiritus pergentes et subtiliter intuentes, crucis mysterio signatum uiderunt mirantesque dixerunt: “Vac, uae, uas uacuum et signatum.” Quibus hoc renuntiantibus, cuncta illa malignorum spirituum turba disparuit (Gregory, *Dialogues*, Bk. III, 7, 3–6, pp. 280–282).

(And one day a certain Jew, coming to Rome from the districts of Campania was approaching on the Appian Way. Arriving at the slope of Funda, he now saw that the day was becoming evening, and in that place, determined that he was not able to turn aside. He made for the nearby temple of Apollo with the purpose of staying there [for the night]. Very much fearing the sacrilege which might transpire at that same place, he nevertheless went to the trouble of making the sign of the cross to defend himself, even though he had little faith in the cross. However in the middle of the night, troubled by fear in that lonely place, he was watchfully lying [awake]. And while watching, he suddenly saw a crowd of evil spirits. And when [they] had sat down, it was as if the crowd was in obedience to one who was endowed with power, and who presided over the others. He began to single out for himself individual acts and deeds by the individual subordinate spirits, and to find out how much each one of them had furthered [the cause of] evil. And when the individual spirits had answered to his questioning, what they had done against [the cause of] good, one leaped up in the middle of them, [and said] he had stirred the spirit of bishop Andreas, when he had appeared in the countenance of a consecrated woman [nun], who lived in his diocese, and had incited [in him] temptation of the flesh. When the evil

spirit who presided heard this, he believed that a great profit had been made for himself, in that he had bent the spirit of such a holy man to fateful error. That spirit, who was revealing these same things, added that in addition to this, in the late hour of the previous evening, he had drawn the bishop's mind so far, that [the bishop] had given a tender touch to the back of that same consecrated woman. Then the evil spirit and that same ancient enemy of the human race who had encouraged this seduction, said that he should complete that which he had begun, since the ruin of such an exalted one of them might give victory over others. And while the Jew who had arrived hither was vigilantly watching and trembling in the anxiety of his great fear, then it was ordered by that same spirit who presided over his subordinates there, that they should find out who it was, who had presumed to lie there in that same temple. The evil spirits, going and closely looking at him, saw him make the sign of the mystery of the cross, and exclaimed: "Oh!, Oh! This is [an] empty and consecrated [place]!" When they had been renounced by him, the entire crowd of spirits disappeared.)

B. Oddr's account reads as follows:

Þat er sagt, at Óláfr konungr var staddr norðr í Naumadali, at tveir hirðmenn konungs girndusk þess at vita, hvárt þat væri satt at þar væri trola gangr mikill í þeim heruðum. Ok á einni nótt fara þeir leyniliga frá skipi konungs, ok ganga í náttmyrki mjök lengi ok sjá síðan eld brenna fyrir sér. Ok nú skunda þeir þangat. Ok er þeir nálgask eldinn sjá þeir at hann brann í helli, ok þar sitja mörq troll ok töludu þau sín í milli. Tekr þá einn til orða, sá er þeir ætluðu at vera myndi forráðandi þeira. "Vituð þér," sagði hann, "at hér er kominn Óláfr konungr, til þess at hann ætlar at reka oss í brott frá eignum várum." Þau kváðusk þat vita. "Vei verði honum. Marga illa hluta höfum vér þolt af honum." Þá mælti höfðingi þeira: "Segið nú þá hvat þér hafið við áttizk." Þá tók til orða einn af þeim. "Ek átta bygð í Gaulardali skammt frá Hlōðum, ok átta ek vingott við Hákon jarl. Gaf hann mér góðar gjafar. En þá er hann var ræntr ríki sínu ómakliga, þá kom þessi í stað hans. Þat barsk at einn dag," sagði hann, "þá er hirðmenn konungs höfðu leik nær búnum, þá þóttumk ek varla bera mega þeira háreysti ok glaum. Ok þótti mér mikil skapraun í öllu saman. Ok þá ræðumk ek í leikinn með þeim, ok þó ósýniliga. Tók ek þá höndum mann einn ok skilða ek svá við þann at ek braut hönd á honum. Ok á öðrum degi braut ek fót annars. Ok hinn þriðja daginn kom konungr til leiksins. Ek fór ok til ok vilda ek þá meiða nokkurn þeira. Stóð ek þá millum þeira, ok þreif ek til eins þeira. En sá tók mik óvægiliga ok lagði fast hendr á síðum mér. Ok eigi myndi þær þá qðruvís vera þó at þær væri af glóanda járnri gørvar. Hann tók at þrøngva mik mjök. Ok var við sjálf at ek mætta eigi standast. Kómumk ek þá nauðliga ór höndum honum ok flýða ek brott þaðan mjök brunninn ok kom ek at óvilja mínum til þessa staðar." Þá mælti annat troll: "Þat er frá mér at segja. Fagar konu á sjónu tók ek á mik. Ok hafða ek horn fullt mjaðar í hendi, er ek at hafða mörqum illum hlutum blandat ok ætlaða ek at byrta konunginum um kveldit þar er hann var á veizlu. Ok er menn varu mjök drukknir, stóð ek við trapizu,

vel búin. Þá rétti konungr til mín hönd sína, en ek gekk at honum ok fekk ek honum hornit. En hann hóf up hornit ok rak í höfuð mér ok framan í andlitit. Ok lauk svá með okkr." Þá tók til orða hit þriðja troll. "Ek tók á mik fríðrar konu mynd ok kom ek í konungs herbergi síð um kveld. En konungr sat berfœttr ok hafði knýtt línbrœkr at beini. Biskup sat á hœgri hendi honum. Þá tók ek at vekja klaða á fœti honum konunginum. Ok hann sá hvar ek stóð, ok kallaði á mik, ok bað mik mýkja klaða á fœtinum. En ek settumk á skörina hjá fœtum hans, bæði fyrir náttverð ok eptir. Ok síðan gekk konungr til svefns, ok ek með honum ok kló ek fótinn þá enn. Ok þá sofnaði biskup ok svá konungr ok þá leitaða ek við at fyrir fara konunginum af djöfulligrum vélum. Ok síðan vaknaði konungr ok laust þá í höfuð mér með bók svá at haussinn lamðisk. Síðan flýða ek á brott þaðan ok ber ek jafnan síðan hallt höfuð. Ok þá vakti konungr biskup, ok bað hann at hyggja hvárt hann væri heill eða eigi af tilkvámu þessa fjánda, er svá sýniliga höfðu komit í þeira herbergi. Biskup gerði sem konungr bað, ok fann hann á fœti hans flekk illiligan fullan af eitri. Ok lét biskup skera þann ór holdinu. Ok síðan var þat grœtt at heilu." Ok er konungs menn höfðu þetta sét ok heyrð þá hurfu þeir aptr hljóðliga, ok kómu á skip at sofnundum öllum mönnum. En um morginninn eptir segja þeir þetta konungi. Ok hann sagði þetta satt vera (*Oddr* 174–78).

(It is said when King Óláfr was located north in Naumadalr, that two retainers of the king desired to know whether it was true that there was much troll activity in those districts. And one night they went secretly away from the king's ship, and they walked for a very long time in the darkness, and then they saw a fire burning in front of them, and they hastened toward it. And when they approached the fire, they saw that it was burning in a cave, and many trolls were sitting there, and they were talking among themselves. Then the one [troll] began to speak, the one whom they believed must be their leader. "You know," he said, "that King Óláfr has come here for this purpose; that he intends to drive us away from our properties." They said that they knew this. "May there come woe to him. We have endured many bad things from him." Then their leader said, "Tell now what kind of dealings you have had with him." Then one of them began to speak. "I made my home in Gaulardalr close to Hlaðir. And I was a good friend of Jarl Hákon. He gave me good gifts, but when he was undeservedly deprived of his kingdom, then this one [Óláfr] came in his place. It happened one day," he said, "when the retainers of the king were having a game near my home, then it seemed I could hardly stand their noise and merriment. And I was annoyed at all of this, and then I decided to join in the game with them, though invisibly. I took hold of one man and I parted with him in such a way, that I broke his hand. And on the next day, I broke the foot of another [man]. And on the third day, the king came to the game. I went there also, and I wanted then to hurt another one of them. I stood there among them, and I grabbed one of them. But that man grabbed hold of me unkindly, and he placed his hands firmly on my sides. And they were then no different than if they were

made of glowing iron. He began to press me hard, and it was almost to the point where I could not endure it. I was barely able to escape him, and fled from there badly burned, and I came to this place not of my own accord." Then the second troll spoke: "This is to be told about me: I took the shape of a beautiful woman, and I had a horn full of mead in my hand, into which I had mixed many evil things, and I intended to serve it to the king in the evening when he was at the feast. And when the men were very drunk I stood next to the table, well dressed. Then the king stretched his hand out to me, and I went to him and gave him the horn. And he picked up the horn, and struck it against my head, right into my face. And that was the end of our encounter." Then the third troll began to speak. "I took the shape of a beautiful woman, and I came into the king's quarters late in the evening. And the king sat barefoot and had wrapped linen breeches around his legs. The bishop sat to his right. Then I began to awaken an itch on the king's foot. And he saw where I stood, and called to me, and bade me massage the itch on his foot. And I sat down on the step next to his feet both before and after dinner. Then the king went to sleep, and I was with him, and I was then still rubbing his foot. And then the bishop fell asleep, just like the king, and then I tried to kill the king with devilish tricks. And then the king awoke, and he struck me in the head with a book, so [hard] that my skull was injured. Then I fled away from there, and since that time I always walk with my head askew. And then the king woke the bishop and bade him check whether he were in good health or not after the visit of those demons, who obviously had come into their quarters. The bishop did as the king had asked, and he found on his feet an ugly spot, full of poison. And the bishop had this cut out of the flesh, and later this was completely healed." And when the king's men had seen and heard this, then they turned back quietly and came to the ships, where all the men were sleeping. And in the next morning, they told this to the king, and he said this to be true.)

Note 3

Notker Balbulus: *De Carolo Magno*

A. Notker writes:

Audito autem iam proximo adventu metuendi Karoli, ascenderunt in turrim eminentissimam, unde longe lateque prospicere venientem potuissent. Apparentibus vero impedimentis, quæ expeditiora Darii vel Iulii fuissent expeditionibus, dixit Desiderius ad Otterum: Estne Carolus tanto exercitu? At ille respondit: Non adhuc. Videns vero exercitum popularium de latissimo imperio congregatum, diffinitè pronuntiavit ad Otterum: Vere in his copiis Carolus exultat. Respondit Otterus: Sed non adhuc, neque adhuc. Tunc æstquare coepit et dicere. Quid faciemus, si plures cum eo venerint? Dixit Otterus: Videbis, qualis ille veniat. De nobis autem nescio quid fiat. Et ecce ista sermocinantibus apparuit scola, vacationis semper ignara. Quam videns Desiderius stupefactus: Iste est, inquit, Carolus. Et Otterus: Non infit adhuc neque adhuc. Post hanc

cernuntur episcopi abbatesque, et clerici, capellani cum comitibus suis. Quibus aspectis, hæc vix egre iam lucis inimicus, mortisque Desiderius singultando blateravit: Descendamus et abscondamur in terra a facie furoris adversarii tam imanis (*De Carolo Magno* 691–92).

(And fearing the impending arrival of Charles, they climbed the highest tower, from where they might be able to see him coming, far and wide. When he saw the baggage, which was lighter than the expeditions of Darius or Caesar had been, Desiderius said to Oggerus: "Is not Charles to be found in so great an army?" But he responded: "Not yet." [Then], seeing the army of peoples gathered from the most extensive [reaches of] the empire, he sharply said to Oggerus: "Surely, Charles rejoices in these troops." Oggerus answered: "No, not yet, not yet." Then [Desiderius] began to get angry and to say: "What will we do, if [even] more should arrive with him?" Oggerus said: "You will see in what way he arrives. But I do not know what will happen to us." And while they were talking, the retinue of the state appeared, always tireless. Seeing them, Desiderius was dumbfounded. "This is Charles," he said. And Oggerus said: "Not yet, not yet." After this, they discerned bishops, abbots and clerics, as well as chaplains with their retinues. Seeing these sights with pain and displeasure, Desiderius despaired of both life and death, and sobbing, he babbled: "Let us go down to the ground and hide from the face of the rage of an enemy so great.")

B. Oddr writes:

Ok þann dag var fagrt veðr af skini, ok gengu hofðingjar ok sveitirnar á hólminum ok sá til, er smáskipin sigldu fyrir. Ok er mǫrg váru sigld skipin, þá sjá þeir eitt mikit skip ok frítt. Ok þá mæltu þeir, at þat myndi vera Ormr inn langi, ok "fǫrum til skipanna." Þá mælti jarl Eiríkr, "Bíðum enn," sagði hann. "Fleiri hafa þeir stór skip en Orm inn langa." Ok þetta skip átti Styrkár af Gimsum, ok var þat mikit skip. Eiríkr mælti, "Meiri ok ágætligri mun yðr sýnask Ormr inn langi." Þá sá þeir eitt mikit skip, ok vel búit ok hofuð á. Ok þá mælti Sveinn konungr, "Nú mun hér fara Ormr inn langi. Verðum nú eigi af seini." Þá svaraði Eiríkr jarl, "Eigi mun þetta vera Ormr inn langi, því at fá hafa enn farit stórskip þeira en mǫrg eru til." Þetta skip átti frændi konungs einn, ríkr maðr ok ágætr. Nú verþr nokkut hlið. Ok þá sá þeir mikit skip sigla. Þá mælti Sveinn konungr, "Nú mun hér fara Ormr inn langi." Jarl Eiríkr svaraði, "Þetta er mikit skip ok frítt, en meiri ok ágætligri mun yðr sýnask Ormr inn langi, sá er Óláfr konungr stýrir." Ok þegar eptir siglir annat mikit skip ok frítt. Ok áttu þetta skip þeir bræðrnir Hyrningr ok Þorgeirr. Síðan varð hlið nokkut, áðr sigldi mikit skip ok frítt með segl blástafat ok var skip þetta miklu meira en þau er áðr hofðu siglt. Þat var skeið ok engi hofuð á. Þá stóð Sveinn konungr upp ok mælti, ok glotti við, "Hræddr er Óláfr konungr. Hann þorir nú eigi at sigla með hofuð á Ormi inum langa. Fǫrum nú ok leggjum at honum." Þá mælti jarl Eiríkr, "Eigi er hér Óláfr konungr á þessu skipi. Þetta skip kenni ek, því at ek hefi þat opt sétt. Þetta skip á Erlingr Skjálgrsson af Jaðri. Ok er betra at leggja um skut þessu skipi

til orrostu þeim drengjum er þar er skipat innan borðs. Ok sjálfir megu vér þat vita, ef vér hittum Óláfr konung Tryggvason, at oss er betra skarð í flota hans en vér mœtim þessi skeið." Þá mælti Óláfr Svíakonungur, "Eigi skyldim vér nú æðrask af mjök at leggja til bardaga við Ólaf konung, þó at hann hafi skip stór, því at er sú skómm ok neisa er spyrjask mun á öll lönd, ef vér liggjum hér óflýanda her, en hann sigli þjóðleið fyrir útan." Þá svaraði Eiríkr jarl, "Herra, lát sigla þetta skip. Ek segi þér þessi tíðendi, at eigi hefir Óláfr konung Tryggvason um siglt, ok þenna dag mun þér kostur at berjask við hann. Nú eru hér margir höfðingjar," sagði Eiríkr, "ok væntir mik þeirar hríðar af þeim, er allir hafim vér ærit at vinna áðr en létu." Ok nú sá þeir sigla mikit skip ok mæltu margir, "Furðu mikit skip er þetta, er nú siglir. Ok þetta mun vera Ormr inn langi. Eigi vil Eiríkr jarl nú berjask ok hefna föður síns." Ok við þetta stendr Eiríkr jarl upp reiðr mjök ok biðr þá ganga til skipanna ok telr þó meiri ván, at Dönum skal eigi óleiðara at berjask en honum ok hans mönnum. Ok nú varð á hlið mjök langt, áðr þeir sjá sigla þrjú skip ok öll stór ok var þó eitt miklu mest. Ok hafði þat drekahöfuð gyllt. Ok nú mæltu allir, at jarlinn hefði satt sagt, ok ferr nú Ormr inn langi. Eiríkr jarl svaraði ok sagði, at eigi var þat Ormr inn langi, en biðr þá þó til leggja, ef þeir vilja, ok reyna þat. Þá tók Sigvaldi jarl skeið eina ok fór út til skipanna ok skjóta upp hvítum skildi, því at þat var friðmark. Hinir hlaða seglunum ok bíða. Ok þetta it mikla skip hét Traninn. Því stýrði Þorkell nefja, frændi konungs. Spyrja þeir þá Sigvalda hver tíðendi hann kunni segja. Hann lézk kunna at segja þau tíðendi, at vélræði var sett fyrir Ólaf konung. Nú láta þeir Þorkell fljóta skipit ok bíða ok vilja nú eigi undan fara. Nú sjá þeir konungarnir, at sigla fjögur skip, ok er eitt miklu mest ok þar á drekahöfuð gyllt. Ok nú mæltu margir, "Furðu mikit skip er Ormr inn langi. Ekki skip í veröldu mun þvílíkt vera at fegrð eða vexti. Ok mikil rausn er í at láta gera slík skip." Þá mælti Sveinn konungur, "Hátt mun Ormr inn langi bera mik í kveld, ok honum skal ek stýra áðr sól setisk." Hann heitr nú á liðit at búask. Þá mælti Eiríkr jarl, ok þó svá at nokkurir menn heyrðu, "Þó at ekki skip hefði Óláfr konungur meira en nú megu þér sjá, þá myndi Sveinn konungur við einn saman Danaher aldri þessu skipi stýra." Sigvaldi mælti, at þeir skyldu hlaða seglunum ok leggja undir hólminn. Kallar hann betr standa veðrit at fara landhallt með stór skip ok byr lítinn. Þeir gera svá, heimtask undir hólminn. Þetta it mikla skip hét Ormr inn skammi. Ok þá leið eigi helmingr cinnar tíðar, áðr en konungar ok allt liðit sá þrjú skip allstór. Ok eptir þessum skipum austr í hafit var at sjá sem gull eitt sæi. Ok er nálgæðisk svá, at sjá mátti, þá váru þar drekahöfuð ágætlig, ok skína með mikilli birti. Ok langt var at bíða áðr en fram kom annarr stafn. Ok var þetta skip búit allt með gulli ok silfri. Nú horfðu hér allir á þetta it mikla skip, er fram renndi. Ok þótti öllum mikil undr hversu löng stund áðr var en þeir sæi skutstafninn. Þá mælti Eiríkr jarl, "Standið nú upp, því at nú þarf eigi at þræta um, hvárt Ormr inn langi mun sigla, ok þar megu þér nú hitta Ólaf konung Tryggvason." Nú þögnuðu margir, ok varð þeim ótti mikill at þessu inu mikla skipi. Hræddisk nú hér margr við sinn bana (*Oddr* 198–204).

(And there was fine weather that day due to the sunshine, and the chieftains were walking together with their retinues on the island. And they looked to where a group of small ships was sailing past. And when many of the ships had sailed past, then they saw a large and beautiful ship. And then they said that this must be the Long Serpent, and "Let us go to the ships." Then Jarl Eiríkr said "Let us wait a bit," he said. "They have many large ships besides the Long Serpent." And Styrkarr of Gimsar owned this ship, and it was a large ship. Eiríkr said, "The Long Serpent will appear larger and more splendid to you." Then they saw a large ship, and it was well decorated and had a head on [its prow]. And then King Sveinn said, "Now the Long Serpent is approaching here. Let us not delay." Then Jarl Eiríkr answered, "This is not the Long Serpent, because few of their large ships have passed and there are many more." This ship was owned by one of the kinsman of the king, a rich and famous man. Now some time passed. And then they saw a large ship sailing. Then King Sveinn said, "Now the Long Serpent is approaching here." Jarl Eiríkr answered, "This is a large and beautiful ship, but the Long Serpent will seem even larger and more beautiful to you, that one which King Óláfr commands." And immediately after this another large and beautiful ship came sailing. And the brothers Hyrningr and Þorgeirr owned this ship. Then some time passed before a large and beautiful ship came sailing with a blue-striped sail, and this ship was much larger than those which had sailed past before. That was a warship and did not have a head on [the prow]. Then King Sveinn stood up and spoke, and grinned at the same time: "King Óláfr is afraid. Now he does not dare to sail with the head on the Long Serpent. Let us go now and attack him." Then Jarl Eiríkr said, "King Óláfr is not here on this ship. I know this ship, because I have often seen it. This ship belongs to Erlingr Skjalgsson of Jádarr. And it is better to engage in battle after the stern of this ship has passed, considering those men who man it. And we ourselves should know this, that if we meet King Óláfr Tryggvason, it is better for us that there be a gap in his fleet, than that we should meet this warship." Then Óláfr king of the Swedes said, "We should not now hesitate too much to attack King Óláfr, even if he has large ships, because it would be a shame and disgrace which would be heard in all lands, if we lie here with an overpowering army, and he sails on the main sea lane past us." Then Jarl Eiríkr answered, "Lord, let this ship sail. I tell you this: King Óláfr Tryggvason has not sailed past, and today you will have the opportunity to fight with him. Now there are many chieftains here," said Eiríkr, "and I expect such a battle from them, because we all have a lot to gain before it is over." And now they saw a large ship sailing and many said, "This is an exceptionally large ship which is sailing now. This must be the Long Serpent. Jarl Eiríkr does not want to fight now and avenge his father." And with this Jarl Eiríkr stood up very angry and told them to go to their ships, and said that it is more likely, that for the Danes it will be no more pleasant to fight than for him and his men. And now there was a very long interval, before they saw three ships sailing, and all were large,

but one was much larger. And this ship had a gilded dragon's head. And now all said that the jarl had told the truth, and now the Long Serpent was passing. Jarl Eiríkr answered and said that this was not the Long Serpent, but tells them nevertheless to attack, if they want, and to find out. Then Jarl Sigvaldi took a war-ship and went out to the ships and hoisted a white shield, because that was a sign of peace. The others furled their sails and waited. And this large ship was called the Crane. Þorkell nefja, the kinsman of the king commanded it. Then they asked Sigvaldi what news he could tell them. He said that he could tell that a trap had been set for King Óláfr. Now Þorkell and his men let the ship float, and they waited, and now did not want to sail away. Now the kings saw four ships sailing, and one was much larger [than the others]. And there was a gilded dragon's head on [the prow]. And now many said, "the Long Serpent is an exceptionally large ship. No ship in the world could be so beautifully decorated or so large. And there is great honor to have such a ship made." Then King Sveinn said, "The Long Serpent will bear me loftily this evening, and I intend to command it before the sun sets." He now commanded the troops to prepare themselves. Then Jarl Eiríkr spoke, but so that some other men heard, "Even if King Óláfr had no larger ship than that which you can now see, King Sveinn together with the Danish army would still never command that ship." Sigvaldi said that they should set their sails and go behind the island. He said it would be more appropriate in this weather to sail along the shore with large ships and little wind. They did that and gathered behind the island. This large ship was called the Short Serpent. And then there passed not half an hour before the kings and the entire host saw three enormous ships. And behind these ships, east upon the sea, it was as if one could only see solid gold. And when it came so close that they could see, then there were beautiful dragons' heads, and they shone with great brightness. And there was a long wait before the stern appeared. And this ship was completely decorated with gold and silver. Now the entire army turned toward this great ship, which passed before them. And it was a great wonder to them all what a long time transpired before they were able to see the stern. Then Jarl Eiríkr said, "Stand up now, because now there is no need to quarrel about whether the Long Serpent will sail by, and there you can now meet King Óláfr Tryggvason." Now many men were silent and a great fear descended upon them because of this huge ship. Now many a man there feared his death.)

Note 4

Vita Haraldi

A. The *Vita Haraldi* tells us (VH 34–5):

Prostrato igitur ac superato in primo congressu a Normannis exercitu Anglorum Rex Haraldus plagis confossos innumeris inter mortuos et ipse prosternitur. Nec poterant tamen quamlibet multa quamlibet letalia vulnera vitam funditus viro adimere: quem pietas salvatoris ad vitam et victoriam feliciter disposuit reparare. Recedentibus itaque a loco cedis hostilibus castris a mulierculis quas miseratio

ad alliganda sauciorum vulnera illuc attraxerat: exanguis jam et vix palpitans pugnator ille pridie potentissimus invenitur. Ab hiis Samaritani erga eum vices implentur ab hiis in vicinum tugurium alligatis vulneribus suis deportatur. Inde a duobus ut fertur mediocribus viris quos francalanos sive agricolas vocant agnitus et callide occultatus ad Wintoniensium deducitur civitatem. Hic biennio latebras in quodam cellario fovens a quadam muliere genere Saracena artis chirurgice peritissima: curatus est et Altissimi cooperante medicina: ad integerrimam perductus sanitatem.

(When the English army was overcome and beaten by this initial Norman onslaught, King Harold was thrown to the ground amongst the slain, pierced through with innumerable blows. But his wounds, although many and deadly, could not entirely deprive of life one whom the goodness of the saviour had happily destined to restore to life and victory. So as the hosts of the enemy left the scene of slaughter, he who just the day before was so powerful, was found stunned and scarcely breathing by certain women whom pity and a desire to bind up the wounds of the injured had led there. Acting as Samaritans toward him and binding up his wounds, they carried him to a nearby cottage. From thence, it is reported, unrecognized and cunningly hidden, he was brought by two peasants to the city of Winchester. Here, keeping to a secret hiding place in a certain cellar for two years, he was healed by an Arab woman who was particularly skilled in the art of surgery; and with the cooperation of the medicine of the Most High, he was restored to undiminished health [Swanton 1984, 13].)

B. Oddr writes (*Oddr* 245–46):

En um náttina eptir bardagann þá kom þorpkarl einn í valinn ok vildi fletta mennina. Ok þat sá einn maðr, er var í valnum, ok ávítaði hann um þat it illa verk ok it svívirðiliga. Þorpkarlinn hljóp þá heim ok segir þetta konu sinni, en hon brá við skjótt ok bjó sér vagn ok beitti hest fyrir ok bað hann fara með sér til valsins. Ok er þau kómu þar, þá spyrr hon, ef nokkur sé sá maðr í valnum, er henni megi þá svara, ok þá svaraði maðr: "Er sá maðr í valnum, er þér má svara." Hon gekk þá til hans, ok veltu þau frá fótum sér dauðum mönnum, ok er hon sá þenna mann, þá létu þau hann í sleðann. Þau spurðu hann at nafni ok at ætt, en hann vildi hvártki segja. Þau þóttusk þó skilja, at hann myndi vera gófufr maðr, bæði fyrir sakir umbúðar ok yfirbragðs. Þessi maðr var Haraldr Guðinason ok hafði fallit fyrir mœði ok blóðrás, ok mörq hafði hann sár ok engi mjök stór. En þat þröngði honum mjök ok angraði, er svá þykkt lágu inir dauðu menninir á honum, at fyrir þeim mátti hann eigi hrœrask. Síðan fluttu þau hann heim í vagninum ok grœddu hann.

(And in the night after the battle, a villager came to the battlefield and wanted to strip the [dead] men. But one man who was among the slain saw this, and he rebuked him for this evil and shameful deed. The villager then ran home and told this to his wife. And she at once made haste and prepared a wagon for herself, and harnessed a horse in front, and told him to travel with her to the battlefield. And when they came there, she then asked if there might be a man

among the slain who could answer her. And then a man answered: "That man is among the slain who can answer you." Then she went to him. And they rolled away the dead men from their feet, and when she saw that man, then they laid him in the wagon. They asked him about his name and ancestry, but he did not want to tell either [one]. Nevertheless, they thought that he might be a nobleman, both on account of his equipment and his appearance. This man was Harold Godwinson and he had fallen due to exhaustion and loss of blood. He had many wounds, but none were very serious. But this had pressed and vexed him much: the dead men lay so thickly around him, that because of them he had been unable to move. Then they brought him home in the wagon and healed him.)

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

Note 1

Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* (AB 81):

Schol. 42. Olaph, sollertissimus festivitatum observator, cum propter divinam religionem a regno esset depulsus et denuo regnum bello recuperasset, in ipso procinctu fertur in papilione dormiens sompnium vidisse. Cumque supervenirent hostes, adhuc illo quiescente, dux sui exercitus, Phin nomine, accedens regem excitavit. Tunc ille suspirans: "O! quid fecisti?" inquit, "videbam me per scalam, cuius vertex sidera tangeret, ascendisse. Heu! iam perveneram ad summum illius scalae, coelumque mihi apertum est ingredienti, nisi tu me suscitando revocasses." Postquam visionem vidit rex, circumventus a suis, cum non repugnaret, occiditur et martyrio coronatur.

(Olaf, a most fervent observer of the feast [days], when he had been driven from his kingdom for the sake of God's religion, and had then again recovered his kingdom by means of war, is said to have had a dream while sleeping in his tent in preparation for that same battle. And when his enemies approached to where he was resting, a leader of his own army, with the name Finnr, going to the king, awakened him. Then he, sighing, said: "Oh, what have you done? I saw myself ascending a ladder, whose top touched the stars. Alas, I had just reached the top of this ladder, and heaven was opened to me so that I could enter, if you had not called me back by awakening me." After the king had seen this vision, he was surrounded by his own [country]men, and since he did not resist, he was killed and crowned with martyrdom.)

The account related in *Heimskringla* reads thusly (*Hkr* II, 368):

Þá rann á hann svefn, ok var þat um hríð. Þá sá þeir her bónda, ok sótti þá liðit til móts við þá ok hófðu upp sett merki sín, ok var þat inn mesti múgr manns. Þá vakði Finnr konung ok segir honum, at bændr sóttu þá til þeira. En er konungr vaknaði, mælti hann: "Hví vakðir þú mik, Finnr, ok lézt mik eigi njóta draums míns?" Finnr svarar: "Ekki mundi þik þat dreyma, at eigi myndi skyldra at vaka ok búask við hernum, er at oss ferr. Eða sér þú eigi, hvar nú er

kominn bóndamúgrinn?" Konungr svarar: "Ekki eru þeir enn svá nær oss, at eigi væri betr, at ek hefða sofit." Þá mælti Finnr: "Hvat dreymsði þik, konungr, þess, er þér þykkir svá mikil missa í, er þú vaknaðir eigi sjálfr?" Þá segir konungr draum sinn, at hann þóttisk sjá stiga hávan ok ganga þar eptir í lopt upp svá langt, at himininn opnaði, ok þangat var stiginn til. "Var ek þá," segir hann, "kominn í öfsta stig, er þú vakðir mik."

(Then sleep overtook him, and this lasted a while. Then they saw the army of farmers, and the host was preparing to attack them, and they had set up their standards, and this was a huge crowd of men. Then Finnr woke the king and told him that the farmers were advancing toward them. But when the king awoke, he said, "Why did you wake me, Finnr, and not allow me to enjoy my dream?" Finnr answered, "There can be nothing for you to dream, that would be more urgent than to be awake and prepare yourself against that army, which is approaching us. Or do you not see how near the farmers' army has come?" The king answered; "They are not yet so near to us, that it would not be better, that I had continued to sleep." Then Finnr said; "What did you dream, king, that seems such a loss to you, that you did not awaken by yourself?" Then the king told him his dream, that he thought he had seen a tall ladder, and that he climbed it up into the sky so high, that heaven opened, and that was where the ladder led. "I had then," he said, "come to the highest rung, when you awakened me.")

Note 2

William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum* reads (*WM* 182):

Nam cum quadam die in insula inclusus solus domi esset, sotiis per oram fluminis ad piscandum dispersis, corpus curis egrum sopori commisit; et ecce Cuthbertus, Lindisfarnensis quondam episcopus, his dormientem alloquitur: "Ego sum Cuthbertus, si audisti. Misit me Dominus ut tibi prospera annuntiem: quia enim Anglia iam dudum peccatorum penas enormiter luit, modo tandem, indigenarum sanctorum meritis, super eam misericordiae suae oculo respicit. Tu quoque, tam miserabiliter regno extorris, gloriose post paucum tempus in solio reponeris, atque adeo signum eximium tibi dabo. Venient hodie pisces tui magnam vim grandium piscium corbis euehentes, quod eo erit mirabilius quia his diebus gelante aqua fluuius asperatus nichil tale sperari permittit; super haec, hodie gelido rore stillans aer omnem piscantium artem eludit. Verum tu, fortunae secundae compos, regaliter feceris si adiutorem tuum Deum et me eius nuntium competenti deuotione demerueris." Haec dicens sanctus regem soporatum sollicitudinibus exiit; matremque etiam prope cubantem tenuesque somnos propter leuamen curarum ad durum cubile inuitantem eiusdem nuntii lactitia confortauit. Experrecti ambo unum et idem se somniasse frequenti uerborum recursum iterabant, cum pisces ingressi tantam piscium copiam exhibuere ut cuiusuis magni exercitus ingluuiem exsaturare posse uideretur.

(One day, when he was penned up on the island, and had been left alone in the house while his companions spread out along the riverbank to fish, he sought relief from his anxieties in sleep; and lo, as he slept, Cuthbert, sometime bishop of Lindisfarne, addressed him in these words: "I am Cuthbert, of whom you may have heard. The Lord has sent me to bring you good tidings, for since England has long been paying very heavy penalties for her sins, He now at length through the merits of her native saints looks on her with an eye of mercy. You too, who are now so pitifully driven from your kingdom, shall in a short time be restored in glory to your throne, and of this I will give you a striking token. Your fishermen will return today with a great catch of big fish in their creels, and this will be all the more remarkable, inasmuch as the wintry river, covered these days with ice, offers no hope of anything of the kind; besides which, the icy drizzle that drops from the air today defeats all the fishermen's skill. But you, when you are restored to prosperity, will act as a king should, if you show your gratitude to God who helps you and to me His messenger by suitable devotion." With these words the saint relieved the sleeping king of all his cares; and with the same glad tidings he cheered the king's mother who lay nearby, wooing elusive sleep to come and relieve her anxieties on her hard bed. They both awoke, and finding they had had the selfsame dream were telling the story over and over, when the fishermen entered and displayed such a huge catch of fish as might seem enough to glut the appetite of any great army [Translation by Mynors 1998, 183].)

Snorri writes in the *Heimskringla* version of "Óláfs saga helga" (*Hkr* II, 340):

Þat var á einni nótt, at Óláfr lá í rekkju sinni k vakði lengi um nóttina ok hugði at ráðagörðum sínum ok hafði stórar áhyggjur í skapi sínu. En er hugrinn mœddisk mjök, þá seig á hann svefn ok svá lauss, at hann þóttisk vaka ok sjá öll tíðendi í húsinu. Hann sá mann standa fyrir rekkjunni, mikinn ok vegligan ok hafði klæðnað dýrligan. Bauð konungi þat helzt í hug, at þar myndi vera kominn Óláfr Tryggvason. Sá maðr mælti til hans: "Ertu mjök hugsjúkr um ráðaætlan þína, hvert ráð þú skalt upp taka? Þat þykki mér undarligt, er þú velkir þat fyrir þér, svá þat, ef þú ætlask þat fyrir at leggja niðr konungstígn þá, er guð hefir gefit þér, slíkt it sama sú ætlan at vera hér ok þiggja ríki af útlendum konungum ok þér ókunnum. Farðu heldr aprt til ríkis þíns, er þú hefir at erfðum tekit ok ráðit lengi fyrir með þeim styrk, er guð gaf þér, ok lát eigi undirmenn þína hræða þik. Þat er konungs frami at sigrask á óvinum sínum, en vegligr dauði at falla í orrostu með liði sínu. Eða efar þú nokkut um þat, at þú hafir rétt at mæla í yðarri deilu? Eigi skaltu þat gera at dylja sjálfan þik sannenda. Fyrir því máttu djarfliga sækja til landsins, at guð mun þér bera vitni, at þat er þín eiga." En er konungr vaknaði, þá þóttisk hann sjá svip mannsins, er brot gekk. En þaðan í frá herði hann huginn ok einstrengði þá ætlan fyrir sér at fara aprt til Nóregs, svá sem hann hafði áðr verit fúsastr til ok hann fann, at allir hans menn vildu helzt vera láta.

(It [happened] one night, that Óláfr lay in his bed and was awake a long time through the night and considered his plans. And he was very anxious concerning his situation. And when his mind grew very weary, then sleep came upon him, but so unencumbered, that he thought himself to be awake and to see all the events within the house. He saw a man standing before the bed [who was] large and magnificent, and who wore costly clothing. It occurred to the king that Óláfr Tryggvason must have come there. The man said to him, "Are you very anxious concerning your future plans, namely, which course you should adopt? This seems strange to me, that you are [even] pondering this, and also that, if you intend to lay down that royal dignity, which God has given you, and at the same time intend to remain here and receive a kingdom from a foreign king who is also unknown to you. Go, rather, back to your kingdom, which you have inherited and have long ruled with the power that God gave you, and do not let your subjects frighten you. It is the distinction of a king to be victorious over his enemies, but it is a magnificent death to fall in battle with one's own company of men. Or do you have any doubt concerning this: that you have the right to your claim in this quarrel? You should not behave so as to conceal the truth to yourself. For this reason you should proceed boldly to your country, so that God may bear witness to you, that this is your possession." And when the king awoke, then he thought to see a glimpse of the man who was going away. And after that he strengthened his heart and resolved upon the plan to travel back to Norway, just as he had earlier been most eager to do, and he found that all his men were most well disposed to this.)

Note 3

"Rauðs þátrr" and *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*

The Old French text of *Le Pèlerinage* reads (*Le Pèlerinage* 46–50):

XX

Charles vit le paleis e la richesce grant:

A or fin sunt les tables, les chaeres e li banc

Li paleis fu listez de azur e avenant

345 Par cheres peintures a bestes e a serpenz,

A tutes creatures e oiseaus volanz.

Li paleis fud vout e desur cloanz,

E fu fait par cumpas e serét noblement,

L'estache del miliu neelee d'argent blanc.

350 Cent coluns i ad tut de marbre en estant,

Cascune est a fin or neelec devant.

De quivre e de metal tregeté douz enfanz:

Cascun tient en sa buche un corn d'ivoire blanc.

Si galerne ist de mer, bise ne altre vent,

- 355 Ki ferent al paleis devers occident,
 Il le funt turner e menut e suvent,
 Cumme roe de char qui a tere decent.
 Cil corn sunent e buglent e tunent ensement
 Cumme taburs u toneires u grant cloches qui pent.
 360 Li uns esgardet le altre ensement cum en riant,
 Que ço vus fust viarie que tut fussent vivant.
 Karles vit le paleis e la richesce grant;
 La sue manantise ne priset mie un guant.
 De sa mullier li memberet que manacé out tant.

XXI

- 365 "Seignurs," dist Carles, "mult gent palais ad ci:
 Tel nen out Alixandre ne li vielz Costantin,
 Ne n'out Crisans de Rome, qui tanz honors bastid."
 E tant cum li emperere cele parole had dit,
 Devers les porz de la mer uit un vent venir:
 370 Vint bruant al palais, de une part le acueillit;
 Cil l'a fait esmuveir e suet e serrit,
 Altresi le fait turner cum arbre de mulin.
 E celes imagines cornent, l'une a l'autre surrist,
 Que ceo vus fust viarie que il fussent tuz vis.
 375 L'un halt, li autre cler, mult fait bel a oir:
 Ceo est avis, qui l'ascute, qu'il seit en parais,
 La u li angle chantent suet e seriz.
 Mult fut grand li orages, la neif e li gresilz,
 E li vent durs e forz, qui tant bruit e fremist.
 380 Les fenestres en sunt a cristal gentilz,
 Tailees e cunfites a brames utremarin.
 Laenz fait itant requeit e suet e serit,
 Cumme en mai en estét, quant soleil esclarist.
 Mult fut gres li orages e hidus e costis.
 385 Karles vit le paleis turner e fremir:
 Il ne sout que ceo fud, ne l'out de luign apris.
 Ne pout ester sur peiz: sur le marbre s'asist.
 Franceis sunt tuz versét, ne se poent tenir,
 E coverirent lur ches e adenz e suvin,
 390 E dist li uns a l'autre: "Mal sumes entrepris.
 Les portes sunt uvertes, si n'en poum issir."

XXII

Carles vit le palais menument turner;
 Franceis covrent lur ches, ne l'osaent esgarder.
 Li reis Hugun li Forz en est avant alez

- 395 E ad dit a Franceis: "Ne vus descunfortez."
 "Sire," dist Carlemaines, "ne serrat ja mais el?"
 E dist Hugun li Forz: "Un petit m'atendet."
 Li vespere aprocet, li orages remist; . . .

XXIII

- Li reis Hugun li Forz Carlemaine apelat,
 420 Lui e les duze pers, sis trait a une part:
 Le rei tint par la main, en sa cambre les menat,
 Voltue, peinte a flurs, e a peres de cristal.
 Une escarbuncle i luist e cler reflambeat,
 Confite en une estache del tens le rei Golias.
 425 Duze liz i ad dous, de quivre a de metal,
 Oreillers de velus e linçous de cendal:
 Al menur a traire .xx. beos e quatre cars.
 Li trezimes en mi est taillez a cumpas:
 Li pecul sunt de argent e l'espunde d'esmal.
 430 Li cuvertures fud bons que Maseuz uverat,
 Une fee mult gente que li reis dunat:
 Melz en vaut li cunreiz del tresor l'Amiral; . . .

XX

(Charles beheld the palace and the great riches: the tables, the chairs, and the benches were of pure gold. Decorated in blue, the palace was delightful with its fine paintings of beasts and serpents and a multitude of creatures and birds in flight. Constructed with skill and nobly secured, it was vaulted and completely covered over. The pillar in the center was inlaid with white silver and a hundred columns of marble stood there, each inlaid with pure gold at the front. There was a sculpture in copper and metal of two children who carried in their mouths horns of white ivory. If any wind, blowing from the sea, struck the palace on the west side, it would make the palace revolve repeatedly, like a chariot's wheel as it rolls earthwards. Their horns blared and bellowed and thundered, just like a drum or a clap of thunder or the tolling of a huge suspended bell. They looked gaily at each other and you would have sworn they were alive. Charles beheld the palace and the great riches, no longer caring one jot for his own possessions, and recalling his wife whom he had threatened so much.

XXI

"Lords," said Charles, "this is a very fine palace. Neither Alexander nor Constantine of old had one such, nor Crescentius of Rome who built such great monuments." No sooner had he spoken these words than he heard a wind coming from the sea ports. It swept noisily up to the palace, meeting it on one side and causing it to move gently and smoothly. The palace revolved just like a windmill and the statues blew their horns and smiled at one another. You would have sworn they were alive. One was loud and the other clear: it was wonderful

to hear. The listener imagined himself in paradise where the angels sing so sweetly and gently. The storm, snow, and hail were tremendous, and the wind was harsh and violent, and it caused great noise and clatter. The windows were of fine crystal, cut and fashioned with ultramarine quartz. Inside all was calm and tranquillity, as in the month of May with the sun shining, but the storm was violent, terrible, and overpowering. Charles saw the palace revolve and quiver, and, having no experience of such a thing, did not know what was happening. He sat down on the marble floor unable to stand upright. The Franks had been thrown to the ground, as they could not remain on their feet. They covered their heads, some lying face down, other [sic] supine, and said to each other: "What a sorry plight! The doors are open yet there is no escape."

XXII

Charles saw the palace revolving gently. The Franks, not daring to look, covered their heads. King Hugo the Strong came forward, saying to the Franks: "Do not be distressed." "Lord," replied Charlemagne, "will this go on for ever?" "Wait a short time," said Hugo the Strong. The evening drew nigh and the storm abated. . . .

XXIII

King Hugo the Strong called to Charlemagne and the twelve peers and drew them to one side. Taking the king by the hand he led them into his vaulted bed-chamber, decorated with crystals and painted flowers. A carbuncle glittered and sparkled brightly there, set in a column from the time of King Goliath. Twelve soft beds stood there, made of copper and metal with pillows of velvet and silken sheets. To move them would have required at least twenty oxen and four carts. The thirteenth in the centre was skilfully wrought: its feet were of silver and its edges of enamel. The coverlet of fine quality had been fashioned by Maseuz, a most noble fairy, who had been richly rewarded by the king. What the Franks were offered was worth more than the emir's treasure. . . . [translation by Glyn Burgess 1988, 46–51].)

The Icelandic þáttur, as told in the *Greatest saga* reads as follows (*OS* (s) 667–672):

En er konungr gekk inn í svefnskemmuna, var kerti loganda borit fyrir honum. Hann lítaðisk um úti í svölunum ok hugði at smíðinni hússins ok skildi þegar setningina hússins, at þat var kringlótt. Gekk hann þá inn ok sá at fyrir innan svalfrnar var skjaldþili umhverfis húst. Fjórar váru útdyrr á skemmuni ok allra jafnlangt í milli. En úti með veggjunum váru rekkjur búnar allvegliga. Enn allt tjaldat, þat er þat þótti boeta. En í þessu húsi váru reistir upp .xx. stafrir, hávir ok digrir. Stóðu þeir í hring. Þar var upp af hvelft ráfit, ok var þat allt steint ok purtreat. En milli stafanna váru brákr, ok þar fyrir innan váru rekkjur búnar ríkismönnum, ok máttu þar rúmliga liggja í hverjum fjórðungi xx. menn, en xl. í útskemmuni. Þar var skipat hirðmönnum konungs. Í miðju húsinu var árinu kringlótt ok víðr með tré gerr ok pallar umhverfis upp at ganga. En uppi á árninum stóð sæng mikil ok ger með inum mesta hagleik. Flest tré váru þar með

kopparajárnum ger ok steint allt, en sumt gull lagt. Upp af hornstøfunum váru stórrir knappar af eiri gervir ok gylldir. En út ór hornstøfunum váru járnslár, en þar af upp kertistikur, ok stóðu þar á upphaldskerti með þrím kvíslum. Úlfr sagði konungi, at hann skal fara í þá seng, er þar var búin, ef hann vildi drauma forvitnask . . . Þá sá hann upp yfir sik í ráfit. Hann sá þar skrifaðan guð sjálfan ok veldishring hans, en þar ofan í frá engla fylki, ok þar fyrir neðan himininn, þann er hvelðr er útan um lopt ǫll. En þar með váru mörkuð himintungl, en neðast ský ok vindar, ok þá fuglar margskyns, en neðast jörðin ok þar með græs ok víðir ok margskonar kvikendi, sjár ok vötn ok sækvikendi á marga lund. En á neðra ræfrinu fyrir útan stafina váru markaðar fornsögur ok frásagnir frá ágætum konungum, ok leit konungr þar lengi á. En er hann hugsaði hér um, þá var þó sá einn hlutr, er honum þótti undarligri en allt annat, at honum þótti sængin snúask undir sér eða húsit ella . . . "Úlfr," sagði konungr, "má svá vera sem mér sýndist í nótt, at sængin, er ek svaf í, snerisk undir mér eða húsit ella." Úlfr svarar: "Því var svá smíðat, herra, at þér skylduð jafnt horfa á sólina, ok draumr þínn skyldi ganga at sólu ok allt athæfi þitt ok forvitni."

(And when the king entered the sleeping chamber, a lighted candle was born before him. He looked about while he was in the outer corridor, and examined the form of the building, which he saw at once to be constructed on a circular plan. Going further in, he found panelling all the way around the house beyond the corridor. There were four main doors to the chamber, equidistantly placed. Round the outer walls, finely-furnished beds had been prepared, all hung with curtains where it pleased the eye. Twenty high, stout posts had been erected inside the building; they stood in a circle upholding the vaulted roof, which was all decorated with designs in color. The spaces between the posts were screened, and within were set beds for the nobility. There was ample room for twenty men in each quarter, and beds for forty more in the surrounding corridor, where members of the king's household were accommodated. In the center of the building was a broad, circular platform of wood, with steps to mount it running round. On the platform stood a large bed, fashioned with surpassing skill. Most of the woodwork was finished with the turner's chisel; it was painted all over and plated with gold here and there. The corner-posts were surmounted by huge knobs of gilded brass. Running out from the corner-posts were iron bars bearing candlesticks, and upon them were fixed three-branched processional candles. Úlfr told the king that he should lie down on the bed there made ready if he wished to dream a prophetic dream . . . He gazed up at the ceiling, and there he saw depicted God himself within his orb of might. Higher and beyond were shown the angelic hosts, lower down the firmament which encloses in its circuit all the regions of air, and there also were depicted the heavenly bodies. Below came the clouds and the winds, then many kinds of winged creatures; lowest of all the earth, with its plants and trees and diverse animals, the seas and lakes too, with many kinds of sea-beasts. On the lower ceiling running round outside the central pillars, deeds of antiquity were portrayed, and stories of famous kings.

The king looked long upon all this. As he reflected upon it, a thing happened which seemed stranger to him than all else: he felt as if the bed were revolving beneath him, or it might have been the whole building. . . "Úlfr," said the king, "can it be, that the bed I slept on last night revolved beneath me, as I thought—or was it the building itself?" He replied: "Things were so arranged, Sire, that you should always be facing the sun, and your dream should follow the course of the sun, together with every turn of your thoughts and all your questioning" [Translation by Turville-Petre 1947, 22–25; with orthographic modifications].)

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

Note 1

- A. William of Jumièges' *Gesta Normannorum ducum* (WJ I, 24–5):
 Quem ad sui perniciem a fonte excipiunt episcopus et comes, hincque baiulorum manibus refertur ad nauem, crismate delibutus. Post hoc intempeste noctis medio, lorica locatur in feretro, innuens ceteris ut suas induerent loricas sub tunicis. Proinde fit intolerabilis luctus per exercitum, Hastingum obisse neophitum; resonat maris littus tanti ducis excessu. Dehinc naui effertur, ad ecclesiam baiulatur. Sacra uestitur antistes indumenta, sacrosanctam pro defuncto mactaturus hostiam; fit commendatio anime, ut corpus scelerum et perditionis in baratro iam sepultum tradatur sepulture. Sed ecce prosilit de feretro, episcopusque comitemque obtruncat gladio. Dehinc lupina rabie cum suis grassatur in plebe. His a funesto perpetratis, theatrum efficitur domus Dei, iugulantur iuvenes, trucidantur senes, depopulatur ciuitas, diruuntur a fundamentis menia. (After the bishop and the count had, to their own ruin, received him from the font, he was taken back to his ship, supported by the hands of his bearers, anointed with chrism. Then in the dead of night, Hasting lay down on a bier dressed in his hauberk and ordered his men to put on their hauberks underneath their tunics. Bitter lamentations then broke out among the warriors, mourning the loss of the newly baptized Hasting, and the shore reechoed the passing of their great leader. Hasting was taken from the ship and carried to the church. There the bishop dressed in sacred garments and prepared to offer the holy sacrifice for the deceased; the last rites were performed, so that his body already buried in the pit of crimes and perdition should be ready for burial. But suddenly he springs from his bier, draws his sword, and kills both the bishop and the count. Thereupon the furious wolf and his accomplices make havoc among the people. When this deadly man performed these crimes, the church of God became a theatre in which young men had their throats cut and old men slain; the town was bereft of its people and its walls razed to the ground.)
- B. William of Apulia's *De rebus gestis Normannorum in Sicilia* (PL 149, col. 1046):
 Utile figmentum versutus adinvenit atque
 Mandat defunctum quod quemlibet esse suorum

Gens sua testetur, qui cum, quasi mortuus esset,
 Impositus feretro, pannusque obducere cera
 Illitus hunc facie iussus latitante fuisset,
 Ut Normannorum velare cadavera mos est,
 Conduntur feretro sub tergo corporis enses.
 Ad monasterii subhumandum limina corpus
 Fertur, et ignaros fraudis, quos fallere vivi
 Non poterant homines, defuncti fictio fallit,
 Dumque videretur simplex modus exsequiarum,
 Erigitur subito qui credebatur humandus.
 Evaginati comitantes ensibus illum
 Invasere loci deceptos arte colonos.
 Quid facerent stolidi? Nec se defendere possunt,
 Quo fugiant nec habent, omnes capiuntur.

(The clever man devised an expedient trick, and he orders that his people should report that someone among his men was dead. Then he was placed onto a bier, as if he had died. The spread-out cloth was ordered to cover him, with his face concealed by wax, as it is the custom of the Normans to cover bodies, and swords were put on the bier behind the back of the body. The body of the one going to be buried is brought to the gates of the monastery. The fiction of death deceives those unaware of the ruse, whom living men had been unable to trick [before]. And when the simple manner of the funeral was seen, he who was going to be buried suddenly rose, and with unsheathed swords those accompanying him attacked the beguiled inhabitants of the place. What could the fools do? They are not able to defend themselves, they have no place to which to flee, and all there were captured.)

- C. *Heimskringla* (Hkr III, 80–1):
 En er njósnarmenn kómu aptr til borgarinnar, þá kunnu þeir segja þau tíðendi, at hofðingi Væringja væri sjúkr ok fyrir þá sök var engi atsókn til borgar. En er svá hafði liðit fram um hríð, þá minnkaði mátt Haralds. Gerðusk þá hans menn mjök hugsjúkir ok daprir. Slíkt allt spurðu borgarmenn. Þar kom, at svá þrængði sótt Harald, at andlát hans var sagt um allan herinn. Síðan fóru Væringjar til tals við borgarmenn ok segja þeim líflát hofðingja síns, báðu kennimenn veita honum grópt í borginni. En er borgarmenn spurðu þessi tíðendi, þá váru þeir margir, er þar réðu fyrir klastrum eða jöðrum stórstoðum í borginni, þá vildi hverr gjarna þat lík hafa til sinnar kirkju, því at þeir vissu, at þar myndi fylgja ofr mikit. Skryddisk þá allr fjöldi kennimanna ok gekk út ór borginni með skríni ok helga dóma ok gerðu fagra prócessónem. En Væringjar gerðu ok mikla líkferð. Var þá líkkistan borin hátt ok tjaldat yfir pellum, borin þar yfir merki mǫrg. En er slíkt var borit inn um borgarhlíðit, þá skutu þeir niðr kistunni um þvert hlíðit borgarinnar fyrir hurðirnar. Blésu þá Væringjar í alla lúðra sína herblástr ok brugðu sverðunum. Þusti þá allr Væringjaherr ór herbúðunum með alvæpni ok hljópu þá til borgarinnar með ópi ok kalli. En munkar ok aðrir

kennimenn, þeir er út höfðu gengit í líkferð þessa, keppðusk hvárir við aðra, at fyrstir ok fremstir vildi út ganga at taka við ofrinu, þá var þeim nú hálfu meira kapp á því at vera sem first Væringjum, því at þeir drápu hvern þann, er þeim var næst, hvárt er hann var klerkr eða óvígðr.

(And when the spies came back to the town, they were then able to report that the chieftain of the Varangians was sick and for this reason there had been no attack on the town. And some time had passed, then Haraldr's strength decreased. His men then acted very disturbed and downcast. The townspeople perceived all this. It got to the point that the illness so oppressed Haraldr that his death was proclaimed throughout the entire army. Then the Varangians went to talk with the townspeople and told them of the death of their chieftain, and they asked the clerics to permit him to be buried in the city. But when the townspeople learned of this, then there were many who administered monasteries or other large churches in the city, and each one wanted to have the body in their church, because they knew that rich donations would follow. Then a multitude of clerics put on their vestments and walked out of the city with shrines and holy relics and they made a fair procession. And the Varangians also made a great funeral procession. The coffin was then carried high and covered with costly materials, and many banners were carried above it. And when this was carried in through the city gates, then they put the coffin down across the gates of the city before the doors. Then the Varangians sounded a call to arms in all their trumpets and drew their swords. The entire Varangian army rushed out of their tents with all their weapons and ran toward the city with shouts and exclamations. And the monks and other clergymen who had gone out into this funeral procession, and who had contended with each other to be first and foremost in receiving the offering, were now twice as eager to be as far as possible from the Varangians, because they killed everyone who was closest to them, whether he was a cleric or layman.

Note 2

- A. The *Roman de Brut* of Wace (*Roman de Brut* II, 13,593–610):

Muissuns od reiz e od glu pristrent
 E en croisés de noiz fu mistrent;
 Od le fu firent enz repundre
 Esprises de lin e de tundre;
 As piez de muissuns les pendirent,
 Merveilluse veisdie firent.
 Al seir, quant vint a l'avesprer,
 Laissierent les mussuns aler;
 Cil s'alerent la nuit logier
 La u il soleient nier,
 Es tas des blez e es muidluns

E es severundes des maisuns.
 Li feus nurri e eschalfa,
 La vile esprist e aluma.
 Bretun virent la vile ardeir,
 Flambe voler, maisuns chaeir;
 A cumbatre se cunreerent,
 Mes vencu furent, kar poi erent.

(They captured sparrows with nets and traps and put fire in hollowed-out nuts; they had fire placed inside, ignited with linen and tinder, and they hung them on the feet of the sparrows. [Thus] they devised a wondrous trick. In the evening, as night was falling, they let the sparrows go; the birds went to lodge in the night where they were accustomed to make their nests, in the heaps of wheat and in the bales of hay and in the roof gutters of the homes where people dwelt. The fire fed and grew hot, it took the city and set it on fire. The Britons saw the city burning, flames flying, houses falling; they arrayed themselves to fight, but they were vanquished, for they were few in number.)

- B. *Heimskringla* (*Hkr* III, 76–7):

Þá leitaði Haraldr þess ráðs, at flyglarar hans tóku smáfugla, þá er hreiðruðusk í borginni ok flugu á skóg um daga at taka sér mat. Haraldr lét binda á bak fuglunum lokarspánu at tyrvitré ok steypði vaxi ok brennusteini ok lét slá eldi í. Flugu fuglarnir, þegar er lausir urðu, allir senn í borgina at vitja unga sinna ok hífýla, er þeir áttu í húspækjum, þar er þakt var reyr eða hálmi. Þá laust eldinum af fuglunum í húspækjurnar. En þótt einn hverr bæri litla byrði elds, þá varð þat skjótt mikill eldr, er margir fuglar báru til víða um borgina í þekjur, ok því næst brann hvert hús at qðru, þar til er borgin logaði.

(Then Haraldr made the plan that his birdcatchers should catch small birds which nested in the town and each day flew to the forest to feed. Haraldr had shavings of tinder bound to the backs of the birds, and he smeared the shavings with wax and sulphur and set fire to them. When they were released all the birds immediately flew together into the town to go to their young and to their nests which they had made in the roofs of the houses that were thatched with reeds or straw. Then fires were started by the birds in the thatch roofs, and although each bird carried only a little bit of flame, there quickly arose a great fire, since many birds distributed it widely to the thatch roofs throughout the town. And thereafter one house after another caught fire until the entire town was burning.)

Note 3

Part 1:

- A. William of Jumièges (*WJ* II, 83–5):

Cumque hec a ministris indicata duci fuissent, quod nusquam inuenire ualerent ligna ad cibaria excoquenda, propter urbis illius forum seu mercatum inhibitum,

precepit illico ut amigdalorum et nucleorum operimenta sufficienter et habundanter in igne ponerentur, ob sua suorumque cibaria decoquenda. Quod postquam imperator comperit, pietate motus, illis copiam uendendi et emendi concessit, dicens Francos omni industria esse peritos, nec sagacitati eorum quemlibet posse debere obuiare.

(When the servants told the duke that they could nowhere find wood for cooking food on, because the market and the shops in that city were forbidden to them, he instantly ordered them to use the shells of almonds and walnuts, which were sufficiently and abundantly available as fuel so that food for himself and his men could be prepared. Upon hearing this the emperor was so moved by compassion that he gave permission to sell and buy as much as they wished, saying that the French were skilled in every enterprise and that no one could match their cunning [translation by van Houts].)

B. *Morkinskinna* (Msk 350–51):

Þá segir Sigurðr konungr at menn hans skyldu ganga á þat stræti í borginni er víðr væri keyptr. Lét hann mundu mikinn þurfa. Þeir sögðu at hvern dag var mörögum hlössum ekit í borgina, ok eigi þurfti þat at ugga at viðinn mundi skorta. Ok nú bjósk svá um at brottu var allr viðrinn er hafa þurfti, ok sögðu þeir til Sigurði konungi. Hann mælti: “Vitið nú þá,” segir hann, “ef þér fáið valhnøtr. Eigi munum vér þeim síðr kunna elda en viðinum.” Þeir fóru ok fengu þetta, svá mikit sem þeir vildu hafa. Síðan kom keisari ok vildarmenn hans með honum. Setjask saman, ok er þar margfaldigr sómi, ok veitir hann konungliga. Ok er þat fann keisari ok dróttning at engi efni skortir, þá sendi hon menn at vita með hverju þeir gørða eldana. En þeir koma at húsi einu líftu ok sjá at þat var fullt af valhnøtum, ok þeir hófðu þat fyrir eldivið. Hon svaraði, “Víst er sjá konungr stórlýndr ok mun fátt til spara síns sóma, því at engi víðr logar betri en þetta.” Hon hafði þetta gørt at láta engum ná viðinum til raunar hvert ráð Sigurðr konungr tœki.

(Then he told his men to go to the wood market in the city, saying that he would need a great deal of wood. They said that every day many loads were brought into the city and that there was no fear of a shortage. But it turned out that the necessary wood was all gone, and they reported that to King Sigurðr. He said: “See if you can find some walnuts. They won’t be any harder to kindle than wood.” They went and got as many as they needed. Then the emperor and his confidants arrived, and they all sat down together. There was a great display of hospitality, and the emperor was given princely treatment. When the emperor and empress realized that there was no shortage of anything, she sent men to ascertain what they were using for firewood. They came to a little shed and saw that it was full of walnuts. They told her about the walnuts and that they were used for firewood. She replied: “This king is certainly prodigal and lets nothing stand in the way of his honor, for no wood burns better than this.” She had cut off the supply of wood to test King Sigurðr’s ingenuity [Translation by Andersson and Gade 2000, 324–25].)

Part 2:

A. William of Jumièges (WJ II, 82–3):

Appropinquans autem urbi Constantinopolitane, constituit ut mula, cui insidebat, pro ferramentis pedum, quibus antea uti solita erat, tunc aureis uteretur, neque quisquam suorum colligere presumeret, quando eadem mula ipsa eadem ferramenta aurea suis pedibus excuteret, ut Greci, qui prius Gallos cupidos auri uocare soliti erant, nullam in suis auaritie occasionem penitus inuenire possent. (As he approached the city of Constantinople, he decreed that the mule on which he was riding should be shod with gold, instead of the iron horseshoes it had used up till then, and that none of his men should dare to pick up the golden horseshoes when the same mule cast them from its hoofs, so that the Greeks, who had formerly been used to call the French greedy for gold, should not find an opportunity to accuse them of avarice.)

B. *Morkinskinna* (Msk 348 [the text of the lacuna here in *Morkinskinna* is supplied from a later version of this saga found in *Fríðsbók* 287]):

Reið Sigurðr konungr ok allir hans menn með þvílíkan prís í Miklagarð. Svá segja menn, at Sigurðr konungr lét skúa hest sinn með gulli áðr hann reið í borgina, ok skyldi svá til haga at undan skyldi stökkva einhverr skórin á strætinu, ok skyldi engi hans manna til líta.

(In such triumph did King Sigurðr and all his men enter Constantinople. We are told that King Sigurðr had his horse shod with gold before riding into the city and arranged that one shoe would come off on the street and that none of his men should take any notice . . . even if the shoes fell off the horses [Translation by Andersson and Gade 2000, 323].)

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

Note 1

A Connection between Snorri Sturluson and the monastery at Viðey:

A Charter of 1226–1230

Sá máldagi var gorr á Alþingi at ráði Magnúss byskops, en Snorri Sturluson hafði upp í Lögrettu ok nefndi vátta:—At á meðal Reykjaness ok Botz-ár skal gjalda af hverjum bæ þeim er ostr er gorr, slíkan hleif sem þar er gorr, til staðarins í Viðey hvert haust. En þar á móti skulu þeir menn allir, er þessa minning gøra eða gjalda til staðarins, skildir undir bœnahald brœðra ok kennimanna á staðnum, þat sem er til sett í reglu á hverjum dögum, við alla þá menn er staðnum gøra gagn eðr gœði sér til miskunnar ok sáluhjálpar. Þessir váru vátar—Magnús Guðmundarson ok Ámundi bróðir hans; Árni Magnússon; Synir Þórðar, Þorleifr, Þorðvarr ok Markús; Teitr Þorvaldsson; Sigurðr Jónsson; Styrmir Kárason; Ketill Þorláksson; Ormr Koðransson; Styrcárr Sveinbjarnarson; Jørsala-Björn; Koðran Svarthofðason (*Sturl* II, 400).

(This agreement was made at the Alþing at the advice of bishop Magnús, and Snorri Sturluson brought it before the legal assembly and named witnesses: that between Reykjaness and Botzá, tribute shall be payed from each one of the farms on which cheese is made, such cheese as is made there, to the monastery at Viðey each fall. And in return, all those men who make this gift and pay it as tribute to the monastery, shall be included in the prayers of the brothers and the clerics at the monastery, as it is established according to the rule each day, for all those men who provide assistance or goods to the monastery, for their own grace and the salvation of their souls. These were the witnesses: Magnús Guðmundarson and Ámundi, his brother; Árni Magnússon; the sons of Þórðr: Þorleifr, Þoðvarr and Markús; Teitr Þorvaldsson; Sigurðr Jónsson; Styrmir Kárason; Ketill Þorláksson; Ormr Koðránsson, Styrcárr Sveinbjarnarson; Jórsala-Björn; Koðrán Svarthofðason.)

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Index

A

- Aachen, 44, 71
- Abbo of Fleury, 38–39, 40
- Abingdon, 16
- Absalon, archbishop of Lund, 21
- Acta Sanctorum in Seljo*, 9, 63
- Aðalbjarnarson, Bjarni, *see* Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson
- Adam of Bremen, 3, 4, 9, 12, 27, 40–41, 48, 53, 54, 55, 57–63, 78, 84–85, 91, 111–113, 119
- Aebischer, Paul, 74
- Aedan, king of Scotland, 39
- Aeneid*, 44
- Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum*, 3, 12, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 53, 58–59, 62–65, 68, 76, 112, 117
- Alcuin, 116
- "aldamót," 37–38
- Ælfifu, *see* Álfifa, queen of England
- Álfifa, queen of England, 95–96, 97–98
- Alfred (the Great), king of England, 14, 88, 94
- Anastasius, 115
- Andersson, Theodore M., 72, 109, 120–121
- Andreas, bishop, 64
- Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 5, 16, 39, 49, 94–97, 109, 114
- Annals of Flatey*, 46
- Árni Magnússon, 32
- Ari Þorgilsson, 2, 3, 7, 18, 19, 24, 25, 27, 37–41, 46, 47, 54, 57, 63, 78, 85, 111–112, 116, 117, 118

- Arngunn Arnórsdóttir, 9
- Ars amatoria* of Ovid, 18, 107
- Ásgeir Jónsson, 32, 33
- Ásgrímr Vestliðason, 9
- Astríðr, queen of Sweden, 84
- Athelney, 88
- Æthelred, king of England, 49, 96
- "áttartal" of Ari Þorgilsson, 2, 7, 25
- Augustine, 12, 44–46, 47, 111

B

- Basel, 72
- Bayonne, 82
- Bede, monk of Jarrow, 19, 39, 40–41, 46, 54, 55, 111, 116
- Bellum Catalinae*, 42–43, 47, 112
- Benedict of Peterborough, 41
- "Bjarkamál," 88–89
- Bjarnarson, Porvaldur, *see* Porvaldur Bjarnarson
- Bjarnharðr the German, 15
- Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 4, 30, 34, 36, 70, 102
- Bjarni Bergþórsson, 9, 17, 23
- Bjarni Guðnason, 3, 7
- Bjarni Einarsson, 32
- Bjarnvarðr Vilráðsson, 15
- Björn Gilsson, 17
- Boethius, 41, 55
- Boyer, Regis, 2, 115
- Breta sögur*, 51
- Bugge, Alexander, 4, 70
- Bury St. Edmunds, 22, 23

C

- Caesar, 86
 Canterbury, 14
Carmen de Hastingæ Proelio, 103
De Carolo Magno of Notker of St. Gall, 4,
 57, 67–68, 70–74, 78, 90, 113
Casus Sankti Galli of Ekkehart, 73
Catalogus regum Norwagiensium, 23, 42, 43
 Cato, 86
 Charlemagne, 44, 67–68, 70–71, 74, 79,
 90, 91, 113
Chronica of Roger of Hoveden, 48–51, 53
Chronica of Sigebert of Gembloux, 44
Chronicon Lethrense, 48, 53
Chronicon of John of Worcester, 49
 Cicero, 73
 Cirencester, 101
De civitate Dei of Augustine, 44–46, 47, 111
 Claussön, Peder, 34–35
 Clover, Carol, 2, 115–117
Codex Calixtinus, 69, 74
 Cologne, 71–72
Commentary of Victorinus, 73
 Compostella, 14, 68–70, 74–75
 Constantinople, 90, 107, 108
 Copenhagen, 30, 32, 33, 48
 Corvey, 15

D

- Degsastan, battle of, 39
 Desiderius, king of the Lombards, 70–71, 74
Dialogues of pope Gregory the Great, 2, 4, 9,
 46, 57, 63–65, 78, 112, 115,
 116, 119
 Dudo of St. Quentin, 11, 100

E

- Eadwine, earl of Northumbria, 96
Ecclesiastical History of John of Worcester, 12
Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis, 12,
 98, 104, 115
 Edinburgh, 27
 Edmund (St. Edmund), king of England,
 37, 38–40, 41, 54, 111
 Edmund Ironside, king of England, 3,
 48–50, 54

- Edward the Confessor, king of England, 4,
 10, 48, 87, 95–97, 98,
 103–104, 105, 106

- Egils saga*, 2, 35, 115–116
 Einar Ól. Sveinsson, 2, 38–39, 115
 Einarsdóttir, Ólafía, *see* Ólafía Einarsdóttir
 Einarsson, Bjarni, *see* Bjarni Einarsson
 Einhard, 42, 43–44, 47, 68, 70, 112
 Eiríkr, archbishop of Niðaróss, 21
 Eiríkr, jarl, 70
 Eiríkr Oddsson, 2, 7, 24, 31
Eirspennill, 34
 Ekkehart, 73
 Ekwall, Eilert, 5, 94
 Ellehøj, Svend, 3, 4, 39
 Emma, *see* Álfífa, queen of England
Erfidrápa of Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld, 75
Erfidrápa of Sigvatr Þórðarson, 91
 Ernis, abbot of St. Victor, 22
Le Estoire de Seint Ædvard le Rei, 87
 Ethelfrid of Northumbria, 39
 Ethelred, king of England, *see* Æthelred,
 king of England
 Ethelred of Rievaulx, 76
 Eyjafjörðr, 120
 Eyjólfur Sæmundarson, 20
 Eysteinn Erlendsson, archbishop of
 Niðaróss, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26,
 41
 Eysteinn Haraldsson, king of Norway, 31,
 93
 Eysteinn Magnússon, king of Norway,
 106–107

F

- Fagrskinna*, 5, 25, 30, 31–33, 36, 49, 59,
 71, 76, 93, 97, 99, 100, 108,
 117
 Faulkes, Anthony, 5
 Finnur Árnason, 85
 Finnur Jónsson, 30, 33
First Grammatical Treatise, 7, 116
Flateyjarbók, 28, 116
 *Flos Peregrinationis, 19
 Flosi, 115
 Foote, Peter, 4, 18, 69, 71
Fóstbræðra saga, 29

- Fríðrekr, bishop, 15
Fríðsbók, 34
 Frontinus, 86

G

- Gade, Kari Ellen, 5, 104, 121
 Gautr, Norwegian pilgrim, 77
 Geirmundr, sister to abbot Ernis, 22
 Gellir Þorgilsson, 9
Genealogia regum Anglie, 5, 97–99, 115
 Geoffrey of Malaterra, 11
 Geoffrey of Monmouth, 3, 46, 48, 50–53,
 100, 112, 119
 Gerald of Wales, 3, 48, 53, 55, 76
 Gervase of Canterbury, 46
 Gervase of Tilbury, 76
*Gesta Guillelmi ducis Normannorum et regis
 Anglorum* of William of Poitiers,
 115
Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum of
 Adam of Bremen, 3, 9, 40–41,
 48, 53, 57, 78, 84–85,
 111–112, 119
Gesta Karoli Magni, 70
Gesta Normannorum ducum of William of
 Jumièges, 42, 99–100, 104,
 106, 108, 114–115
Gesta regum Anglorum of William of
 Malmesbury, 4, 44–46, 47, 49,
 85–90, 91, 103, 109, 112, 114,
 118, 120
 Gizurr gullbráðrskald, 91
 Gizurr Hallsson, 8, 18–19, 23
 Gizurr hvíti, 15
 Gizurr Ísleifsson, 16, 18, 23, 55, 118
 Gngu-Hrólfur (Rollo), 51, 54
 Gormund, king, 101
*Greatest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason, see Largest
 saga of Óláfr Tryggvason*
Greatest saga of St. Óláfr, 29, 68, 88, 90, 91
 Gregory the Great, pope, 2, 37, 38, 39, 46,
 57, 63–65, 78, 112, 115, 116,
 119
 Gregory VII, pope, 16
 Grimalt, 73
 Gudbrandsdalen, 82
 “Guðmundar saga,” 19

- Guðmundr Arason, 19, 24
 Guillaume d’Orange, 117
Gullskinna, 34
 Gunnlaugr Leifsson, 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12,
 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 28, 30,
 51, 75, 76, 77–78, 113, 117,
 119
 Gyða, daughter of Osgod Clapa, 98
 Gyrth, brother of Harold Godwinson, 102

H

- Hákon Hákonarson, king of Norway, 31,
 35–36
 Hálfðan svarti, 27, 31, 93
 Halldórsson, Ólafur, *see* Ólafur Halldórsson
 Hallfrøðr vandræðaskáld, 9, 75–76
 Hallr Teitsson, 18, 23
 Hallr Þórarinnsson, 118
 Hämel, Adalbert, 69
 Hanssen, Jens, 3
 Hanssön, Laurents, 34–35
 Haraldr gilli, king of Norway, 32
 Haraldr gráfeldr, king of Norway, 36
 Haraldr harðráði, king of Norway, 5, 43, 96,
 99, 100–102, 108
 Haraldr hárfagri, king of Norway, 26, 27,
 51, 68, 83, 101
 Haraldr Sigurðarson, *see* Haraldr harðráði
 “Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar,” 87, 96, 99,
 101, 104
Harðar saga, 121
 Harold Godwinson, king of England, 4,
 76–78, 102–106, 113
 Harold Harefoot, king of England, 95, 98
 Hartwig, archbishop, 16
 Hasting, the viking, 100
 Hastings, 76–78, 86, 88, 102, 104, 106,
 113, 120
 Haukadalr, 18, 19, 118
Heilagra manna sögur, 65
Heimskringla, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 22, 25, 29, 30,
 31, 32, 33–36, 58, 59, 62–66,
 71, 81, 87, 88, 93, 95, 97, 99,
 100, 102–103, 105, 107,
 108–109, 114, 117–118,
 120–121
 Heinrich, bishop, 15

- Helgeå, 87, 89
 Henry I, king of England, 3, 50–51
 Henry III, emperor, 15, 40
 Henry of Huntingdon, 49, 96, 100
 Herdís Daðadóttir, 9
 Herford, Germany, 15, 16, 23, 55
 Hermann Pálsson, 38–39
 Hermannus, archdeacon, 39, 40
Herzog Ernst B, 72
 Heusler, Andreas, 5
 Hildesheim, 15
Historia Anglorum of Henry of Huntingdon, 49
Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagiensium of Theodoricus, 3, 9, 10, 11, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 30, 41–47, 53, 54, 111–112, 117
Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum of Bede, 3, 39, 40–41, 111
Historia Normannorum, 22, 42, 47, 54, *see also Gesta Normannorum ducum*
Historia Norwegiae, 3, 21, 25, 26–7, 50–53, 54, 55, 57–60, 62–65, 76, 84–85, 112, 117
Historia regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth, 50–52, 119
 “Historical saga of St. Óláfr,” *see* “Óláfs saga helga” of Snorri Sturluson
 Hólar, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 65, 118, 119
 Honorius Augustodunensis, 3, 47–48, 52
 Horace, 41
 Hrðaknútr, king of England, 5, 50, 95–96, 97–98
 Houts, Elisabeth M. C. van, 5, 101–102
 Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson, 14, 70, 74–75
 Hreinn Styrmisson, 17
 *Hryggjarstykki, 2, 7, 8, 24, 31
 Hugh of Montgomery, the Proud, 12–13
 Hugh of St. Victor, 9, 22, 41, 55
 Hugo, Bishop of Sitten, 73
 Hugon, king of Constantinople, 90
Hungrvaka, 15, 18, 19
- I**
 Icelandic Annals, 14
Imago mundi of Honorius Augustodunensis, 3, 47, 52

- Indrebø, Gustav, 36
 Ingi krókhrygg, king of Norway, 27
 Ingigerðr, daughter of Óláfr, king of Sweden, 84
 Ingimundr Þorgeirsson, 19, 23
 Íngunn the virgin, 17
 Isidor, 19, 116
 Ísleifr Gizurarson, 15, 16, 18, 23, 40, 41, 55, 111
Íslendingabók, 3, 5, 7, 18, 24, 25, 37–41, 54, 63, 71, 111–112, 116, 117, 118
 Ívarr, son of Ragnarr loðbrók, 38
 Ívarr, son of Rognvaldr, 51
 Ívarr Ingimundarson, 107

J

- Jacob, son of Óláfr, king of Sweden, 84
 Jæren, 34
 Jaroslav, king of Russia, 84
Jatvarðar saga, 10, 88
 Jerusalem, 107, 108
 Jocelin of Brakelond, 22
Jöfraskinna, 34
 Johannes (Jón), bishop and missionary to Norway, 58, 62–63
 John of Worcester, 12, 41, 49, 96
 Johnsen, Arne Odd, 44, 55
 Jón Eggertsson, 33, 34
 Jón the Irishman, 15
 Jón Loptsson, 20, 24, 35, 120
 Jón Ögmundarson, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 55, 107, 118, 119
 Jón Vigfússon, 34
 Jónas Kristjánsson, 8, 30
 “Jóns saga,” 17, 18, 107, 114, 118
 Jónsson, Finnur, *see* Finnur Jónsson

K

- Kalinke, Marianne, 107
 Kári Rúnólfsson, 121
 Karl Jónsson, 2, 21, 24, 28, 30, 63, 119
Karlamagnús saga, 68, 71, 90
 Ketill, bishop of Hólar, 19, 25
 Kirchmann, Bernard C., 26
 Kirchmann, Johannes, 26
 Klængr Þorsteinsson, bishop of Skálholt, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 107, 114

- Knútr ríki Sveinsson (Cnut the Great), king of Denmark, Norway, and England, 3, 48–50, 54, 87, 88, 93, 94, 95, 97
Knýtlinga saga, 31, 49–50
 Koht, Halvdan, 3, 52
 Kolbeinn sterki, 82
 Kolr Þorkelsson, 16
 “konunga ævi” of Ari Þorgilsson, 2, 7, 25, 27
 Kristjánsson, Jónas, *see* Jónas Kristjánsson
Kristni saga, 8
 Kválen, Eivind, 120–121

L

- Lange, Gudrun, 3, 28
Landnámabók, 7, 24, 54
Largest saga of Óláfr Tryggvason, 8, 28, 35, 77
Legendary saga of St. Óláfr, 4, 8, 9, 29, 30, 64, 81, 82–85, 86, 88–89, 114
Leiðarvísur og borgaskipun, 15, 72, 120
 Leo IX, pope, 40
Liber de legibus Angliæ, 3, 48–53, 55, 112
Libri dialogorum of pope Gregory, *see Dialogues*
 Lincoln, 20, 23, 24, 55
 Lönnroth, Lars, 4, 70, 74
 Loptr Sæmundarson, 20
 Louis-Jensen, Jonna, 8, 34, 35
 Lübeck, 26
 Lucan, 41
 Luna, 100
 Lund, 16, 21

M

- Magdeburg, 16
 Magnús, bishop, 19
 Magnús berfœttr, king of Norway, 12, 20, 30, 35, 106
 Magnús Erlingsson, king of Norway, 20, 31, 41, 93
 Magnús Óláfsson (Magnús góði), king of Norway, 30, 50, 67, 93, 97–98, 99
 “Magnúss saga ins góða,” 93, 95–96, 97
 “Magnússona saga,” 106–108
 Mainz, 44, 71–72
 Markús Gíslason, 14

- Martin (St. Martin), bishop of Tours, 65–67
Martinus saga, 66
Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey, 41
 Merlin, 50–53
 “Merlínusspá,” 50–51, 53, 119
 *Middle saga of Óláfr Haraldsson, 29–30, 85
De mirabilibus mundi, 47
De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi, 38–39, 40, 111
 Moberg, Ove, 4, 5, 86–89, 94
Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ, 3
De moribus et actis primorum Normannorum ducum of Dudo of St. Quentin, 100
 Morkere, earl of Northumbria, 96
Morkinskinna, 5, 8, 12, 25, 30, 31, 32, 36, 50, 93, 96–99, 100, 102–104, 107–109, 114, 117, 120–121
 Munch, P. A., 27
 Munkaþverá, 109, 120, 121
- N**
 Naumadalr, 64
 Niðaróss, 16, 22
 Nikulás Bergsson, abbot, 14, 72, 120
Njáls saga, 2, 115–116
 Nordal, Sigurður, *see* Sigurður Nordal
 Normandy, 11, 13, 41, 48, 51–52, 98, 101, 104, 106
 Notker Balbulus, monk of St. Gall, 4, 9, 57, 67–68, 70–74, 78, 113
 Notker Labeo, monk of St. Gall, 73

O

- Obodrites, 84
Oddaverja annal, 35
 Oddi, 18, 20, 23, 24, 118, 120
 Oddr Snorrason, 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 22, 28, 30, 57, 59, 60–67, 68, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76–78, 112–113, 116, 117, 119
 Odmarus, 102
 Ólafía Einarisdóttir, 3
 Óláfr, king of Sweden, 70, 84
 Óláfr Haraldsson (St. Óláfr), king of Norway, 4, 5, 9, 16, 22, 25, 26,

- Óláfr Haraldsson (St. Óláfr), king of
Norway (continued), 29, 30, 31,
42, 47, 54, 60, 64, 68, 81–91,
93, 99, 106, 111, 112, 113–114
- Óláfr Magnússon, king of Norway, 106
- Óláfr Tryggvason, king of Norway, 1, 2, 4, 5,
8, 9, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25,
27, 28, 30, 37, 40, 42, 46, 47,
48, 57–67, 70, 74, 76–79, 85,
88, 91, 111, 112–113, 117, 119
- “Óláfs saga helga” of Snorri Sturluson, 4, 29,
34, 65, 81–83, 85–90, 91, 101,
113–114
- Óláfs saga hins helga hin mesta*, see *Greatest
saga of St. Óláfr*
- Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* of Oddr Snorrason, 4,
8, 32, 59, 60–66, 68–69, 71–72,
75, 77, 90, 112–113, 116
- Ólafur Halldórsson, 35
- “Old Lay of Bjarki,” see Bjarkamál
- *Oldest Morkinskinna, 31
- “Oldest saga of St Óláfr Haraldsson,” 1, 2,
4, 8, 9, 29, 30, 85, 87, 89–90,
113–114, 117
- Orderic Vitalis, 3, 5, 11–13, 51, 98, 101,
102–106, 109, 115
- Orkneyinga saga*, 35
- Osgod Clapa, 98
- Otker, 70
- Óttarr, (Ohtere), merchant, 14
- Óttarr svarti, 9, 91
- Ovid, 18, 23, 41, 107–108, 114

P

- Páll Jónsson, 20, 23, 24, 55
- Pallas, son of Evander, 44–46
- Pálsson, Hermann, see Hermann Pálsson
- Paris, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 55
- Pascal II, pope, 16
- Paschal III, pope, 67
- “Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi,” 22
- Passio Olavi*, 42, 43
- Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, 38–39, 40, 111
- Pavia, 70–71
- Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, 4, 67–68, 90,
113
- Peringskiöld, Johann, 33

- Philippica* of Cicero, 73
- Phocas, emperor of Constantinople, 38, 39
- Plato, 41
- Pliny the Elder, 41
- Poppo, missionary to the Danes, 61
- Prévost, August le, 98
- Priscian, 73
- Prophecies of Merlin*, see *Prophetiae Merlini*
- Prophetiae Merlini*, 3, 48, 50, 52–53, 55,
112, 119
- Prose Edda*, 35
- Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, 4, 67–70, 74–75,
78, 79, 90, 113, 119

Q

- Quedam exceptiones*, 104

R

- Ragnarr loðbrók, 38–39, 111
- Ragnheiðr Þorhallsdóttir, 20
- Ragnhildr, wife of Rgnvaldr, 51–52
- Rauðasandr, 14
- “Rauðs þátr,” 4, 68, 90, 113
- Reichenau, 15, 72–74
- Remedia amoris* of Ovid, 107, 114
- Reykjaholt, 109, 120, 121
- Rhetorica* of Cicero, 73
- Richard, Earl of Rouen, 95
- “Rikini,” 16–17, 23, 55
- River Ouse, 96–97
- Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, 104
- Robert, archbishop of Normandy, 42
- Robert (the Magnificent), duke of
Normandy, 108
- Robert Guiscard, 100, 101
- Roger of Hoveden, 3, 22, 41, 48–51, 53
- Rognvaldr, jarl of Mœrir, 51–52, 54
- Rollo, see Gngu-Hrólfr
- Roman de Brut* of Wace, 100–101, 115
- Rome, 14, 15, 19, 23, 44, 45, 106
- Rouen, 101
- Rúðólfr, missionary, 16

S

- “Saga of Agulando,” 68

- *Saga of Óláfr Tryggvason of Gunnlaugr
Leifsson, 77–78
- Sallust, 42–43, 44, 47, 112
- Sæmundr Sigfússon, 2, 7, 16, 18, 19, 20,
23, 24, 25, 35, 55, 57, 71, 117,
118, 120
- Santiago de Compostella, 69
- Saurboer, 14
- Scipio Africanus, 86
- See, Klaus von, 4, 86–87, 88–89
- Seeland, 59
- “Separate saga of St. Óláfr” of Snorri
Sturluson, 29, 35
- Sievers, Eduard, 5
- Sigebert of Gembloux, 9, 22, 41, 44, 55
- Sigmundur Ormsson, 14
- Sigurðr (Sigwardus), missionary to Norway,
58, 62–63
- Sigurðr Magnússon (Jórsalafari), king of
Norway, 26, 101, 106–107, 108
- Sigurðr slembir, king of Norway, 7
- Sigurður Nordal, 29
- Sigvatr Þórðarson, 9, 67, 91, 101
- Skálholt, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 118,
119
- Skard, Eiliv, 3, 51
- Skúli Bárðarson, 35–36
- Snæfríðr, 83
- Snorra Edda*, 96
- Snorri Sturluson, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 18, 20,
22, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33–36,
65, 67, 76, 81, 83, 85, 87–89,
91, 93, 102, 109, 118,
120–121
- Solinus, 47–48
- Song of Roland, 88–89
- Springer, Otto, 13
- St. Benedict, 64–65, 115
- St. Cuthbert, 88
- St. Edmund, see Edmund, king of England
- St. Egidius, 14
- St. Evroul, 11, 98, 104
- St. Gall, 72–74
- “St. Gallener ABCdarium Normannicum,” 74
- St. James de Compostella, 14, 68–69
- St. Leo, archbishop of Rouen, 82–83
- St. Martin, see Martin, bishop of Tours
- St. Victor, 21, 22, 23, 26, 55
- Stamford Bridge, 43, 96, 99, 102, 104
- Statius, 41
- Steinnes, Asgaut, 3, 4, 47
- Stiklastaðir, 84, 88, 89, 91, 93, 99
- Stockholm, 33
- Storm, Gustav, 3, 4, 8, 29, 51, 84
- Sturla Sighvatsson, 35
- Sturla Þórðarson, 8, 35
- Sturlunga saga*, 19, 35
- Styrmir Kárason, 29, 30, 121
- Suetonius, 86
- Sulpicius Severus, 4, 57, 65–67, 78, 112,
119
- Sveinn Álfífuson, 93
- Sveinn Forkbeard, king of Denmark, 41,
70
- Sverrir, king of Norway, 21, 28, 31, 41
- Sveinsson, Einar Ólafur, see Einar Ól.
Sveinsson
- Sverrir Tómasson, 2, 116
- Sverris saga*, 1, 2, 21, 24, 28, 30, 119
- Svldr, 27, 28, 59, 62, 70, 75–78
- Symeon of Durham, 46

T

- Teitr Ísleifsson, 118
- Thangbrand the priest, see Þangbrandr
- Theodoricus, monk, 3, 9, 10, 12, 22–23,
25, 26, 27, 41–47, 53, 54,
58–59, 62, 68, 76, 79, 85, 106,
111–112, 114
- Thomas à Becket, archbishop, 14
- Togeby, Knud, 4
- Tómasson, Sverrir, see Sverrir Tómasson
- Topica* of Cicero, 73
- Topographica Hibernica* of Gerald of Wales,
3, 48, 53, 55
- Tostig Godwinson, 96, 104–105
- Totila, king of the Goths, 64–65
- Toulouse, 14
- Tovi the Dane, 98
- Trondheim, 32
- Turnus, 45–46
- Turpin, bishop of Rheims, 68
- Turville-Petre, G., 4
- Turville-Petre, Joan, 4

P

- Pangbrandr the priest, 58, 62–63
Þiðreks saga, 71, 72, 118
 Þingeyrar, 1, 8, 9, 16, 17, 21, 23, 24, 28,
 29, 30, 65, 78, 112, 118, 119,
 121
 Þorfinnr munnr, 91
 Þorgerðr Þorsteinsdóttir, 9
 Þórhallr Þorláksson, 20
 Þórir, bishop of Hamar, 21
 Þórir, archbishop of Niðaróss, 21
 Þorlák, bishop, 19
 Þorlák Rúnólfsson, bishop, 19
 Þorlák Þorhallsson, bishop of Skálholt, 20,
 21, 23, 24, 25, 55
 “Þorláks saga helga hin yngri,” 116
 Þormóðr, companion of bishop John 62
 Þormóðr Kolbrúnarskáld, 88, 91
 Þormóður Torfason, 32, 33, 34
 Þorsteinn Þorðarson, 34
 Þorvaldur Bjarnarson, 4
 Þverá, 14
 Þykkvibær, 20
 Þyri (Thore), queen of Norway, 59, 62–63

U

- Unger, C. R., 33, 65

V

- Valerius Maximus, 86
 Valþjófssta ðr, 14
Veraldar saga, 19
 Victor II, pope, 15
 Victorinus, 73
 Viðey, 29, 121

- *Vie romancée de Charlemagne, 74
 Vilmundr Þórólfsson, 17
 Virgil, 44
Vita Haralds, 4, 57, 75–78, 113, 119
Vita Karoli Magni of Einhard, 42, 43–44,
 47, 68, 70, 79, 112
Vita Leoni, 82–83, 113
Vita Sancti Martini of Sulpicius Severus, 4,
 57, 65–67, 78, 112, 119
Vita Sancti Wiborodae, 73
 Vries, Jan de, 5, 101–102

W

- Wace, 99, 100–101, 115
 Wiboroda, 73
 William of Apulia, 11, 99, 100
 William of Jumièges, 5, 11, 42, 99–100,
 101, 102–104, 108, 114–115
 William of Malmesbury, 4, 41, 44–46, 47,
 49, 85–90, 91, 96, 100,
 102–104, 109, 112, 114, 118,
 120
 William of Newburgh, 41
 William of Poitiers, 11, 103–104, 109, 115
 William Rufus, 50
 William the Conqueror, duke of Normandy
 and king of England, 48, 77, 86,
 89, 102–104
 Winchester, 95
 Worm, Ole, 34
 Worms, 71

Y

- “Ynglingasaga,” 33, 93

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